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LETTERS

ON

THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES

OF

EDUCATION.

BY ELIZABETH HAMILTON,
Author of the Memoirs of Modern Philosophers, &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

THIRD AMERICAN EDITION.

BOSTON:
SAMUEL H. PARKER, 164, WASHINGTON-STREET.
1825.

281712

Waverley Press.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE degeneracy of mankind in the present period, compared with the preceding, has been a favourite theme of declamation in every age. But declamation has not the force of argument: the former may embellish sophistry, but it is only the latter that can elicit truth.

To form a just and true estimate of the degeneracy or improvement of any particular period, requires such an accurate and extensive knowledge of circumstances and events, such elevated and comprehensive views of causes and effects; that few, even among the wisest of the sons of men, can be supposed equal to the task.

Difficult, however, as it may be to ascertain this point to its full extent, there are certain principles intimately connected with the important question, which are happily within the reach of every thinking being. That that society which contains the greatest number of wise and virtuous individuals, is the happiest and most perfect, cannot admit of doubt; and that the wisdom

and virtue of individuals, will be in a great measure in proportion to the pains bestowed on their education, is equally evident ; wherever, therefore, education becomes an object of universal interest and attention, we may safely pronounce society to be in a state of progressive improvement.

From the number of writers upon the subject of Education that have lately appeared, and from the favourable reception which their various treatises and systems have met with from the public, an inference may be drawn, highly pleasing to every philanthropic mind. Insensible must be the soul, that does not take an interest in what so nearly concerns the happiness and prosperity of the society in which he lives ; and narrow the heart, which does not extend that interest to the happiness of the succeeding generation !

Inspired by this sentiment, the writer of the following pages has taken up the pen, not to criticise the systems of others, nor to offer mechanical rules for facilitating the work of instruction, but humbly to throw in her quota of observation and experience, as a small addition to the general stock.

It appears to her, that upon the important subject of education *rules* are less necessary than *principles ;* and that it is by implicitly following the former, as they have been laid down by em-

inent writers, without examining the latter, that disappointment has so frequently ensued.

The same practice would be followed by the like consequence in every branch of science.

The agricultural improver, who, on the northern side of the Grampian Hills, should implicitly adopt the plan of husbandry laid down by the Devonshire farmer, would have but sorry crops. In vain would he boast, that his ploughs were of the same construction, that his furrows were of equal depth, and that he had, in spite of frosts and snow, of storm and tempest, committed the seed to the reluctant bosom of the earth on the appointed day : of his labours and his toil, the sole reward would be mortification and disappointment ! But, if instead of proceeding by rules adapted to a more genial climate and more benignant soil, the northern agriculturalist directs his attention to the nature of soil in general, with all its particular modifications ; if he studies the temperature of the region in which he lives, and carefully proves the principles he thus acquires, by the test of observation and experience ; he will literally " sow in hope, and reap in joy, bringing his sheaves with him."

So to the writer of the following letters it appears to be with regard to the work of Education, which, without some knowledge of the principles of the human mind, must frequently be labour lost. To an examination of these princi-

ples as far as early education is concerned, and to the practical inferences arising from them, the present volume is devoted. Originally undertaken at the request of a particular friend, it is, in the sanguine hope of being more extensively useful, now submitted to the public. Far, however, from encouraging the chimerical idea of influencing the opinions of the prejudiced, or of teaching the giddy and unthinking votaries of folly and fashion to listen to the voice of reason; the views of the author are solely confined to give assistance to the young but conscientious parent, who, anxiously solicitous for the virtue and happiness of her offspring, is in danger of being bewildered amid the variety of systems that offer themselves as unerring guides in the important path of education. Did the abilities of the writer bear any proportion to her zeal, she would have little reason to doubt of success; but however limited her powers, if advantage to any individual should result from her present employment of them, she will rejoice in the reflection that *she has not lived in vain !*

LETTERS

ON

THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES

OF

EDUCATION.

LETTER I.

Preliminary observations.—Influence of early association exemplified in the characters of the Hindoos and Americans.—Subject divided into two branches, viz. the culture of the heart, and understanding.—Reasons for treating of the former first.—Term association explained by examples.—The end and object of education to be thoroughly ascertained.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE task you have so long assigned me is at length commenced; and had inclination only been consulted, should have been undertaken at a much more early period; but whilst friendship impelled to an immediate compliance with your request, reflection convinced me of the necessity of delay.

The more deeply I contemplated the subject of education, the more thoroughly was I impressed with a sense of its importance. What I had at first considered as easy and simple, appeared upon close inspection to be difficult and complex; and as I traced effects to their causes, I frequently found

circumstances I had overlooked as trifling, rise into magnitude, and branch out into consequences unseen and unexpected.

Every discovery I made, tended to increase diffidence in my own abilities; which I became truly sensible were inadequate to the due performance of a task so arduous. With this consciousness, I should have been highly culpable, rashly to have undertaken it.

On every subject that requires serious investigation, our sex is doomed to experience the double disadvantage arising from original conformation of mind, and a defective education. From the quickness of our perceptions we are frequently liable, "where we see a little, to imagine a great deal, and so jump to a conclusion;" while, from an education conducted upon no regular plan, we acquire no regular associations in our ideas, no accurate arrangement, no habit of mental application. Of Nature, indeed, we have little reason to complain. She has sufficiently qualified us for that sphere in which she evidently intended we should move; and that this sphere is neither undignified nor confined, she has rendered evident, from the intellectual faculties with which she has endowed us. Why these should be given to us as a *sealed book* which ought not to be opened, I confess I cannot comprehend. Nor can I, perhaps, plead the cause of my sex more effectually, than by explaining the influence of early education; and thus rendering it evident to every unprejudiced mind, that if women were so educated as to qualify them for the proper performance of this momentous duty, it would do more towards the progressive improvement of the species, than all the discoveries of science, and the researches of philosophy.

Could the biographers of illustrious men attain a perfect knowledge of all they had received from early education, I am fully persuaded, that it would shed a lustre on the maternal character, conspicuous as glorious.* "Never," observed a man of acknowledged sense and penetration, "never have I known a man remarkable for wisdom and virtue, who was the son of a foolish mother." Nor will the assertion appear extraordinary, when we consider how often the tempers and dispositions, falsely attributed to nature, may be traced to impressions received in infancy. A fact which might easily be ascertained by observation on the characters around us; but as objects pressing so closely upon the sight, as to have their parts necessarily viewed in succession, have a less striking effect than those that can be surveyed at a single glance, I shall beg leave to present you with some proofs of the influence of early education, which appear to my mind sufficiently convincing.

Whether we cast our eyes on the effeminate and indolent inhabitants of the East, or turn our attention to the more sturdy savages of the Western hemisphere, still we shall find the effects of early edu-

* An honourable testimony to the truth of what is here advanced, is given by St. Paul in his epistle to Timothy, to whom he says: "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, *which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded that in thee also.*"—2 Tim. i. 5.

The Historian Tacitus seems, likewise, to have taken a generous pleasure in pointing out the influence of maternal instruction; an illustrious instance of which he has given in the life of Agricola. "Julia Procilla, Agricola's mother, was," says Tacitus, "respected for the purity of her manners. *Under her care, and as it were in her bosom*, the tender mind of her son was trained to science and every liberal accomplishment." See Murphy's Translation of Tacitus, vol. iv. The degeneracy of morals under the Emperors is, by this distinguished author, traced to the period when mothers began to give up the education of their children to slaves and hirelings.

cation too potent for time to efface, or death itself to conquer. A sensible and accomplished traveller of my own sex, after having given a concise but striking account of the religion and manners of the Hindoos, observes as follows:*—"It is astonishing with what strictness the *Hindoos* observe these rules, *even to starving themselves to death, rather than break through them.* The children of the Hindoos are not to be tempted to eat any thing forbidden, either by persuasion, or by offering them the greatest delicacies; which I have often been witness of." "*It is the first impression their minds receive;* they are used to seeing it strictly observed by their own and other casts; it grows up with them as the first and most absolute law, and is perhaps observed with more strictness than any other law, religious or civil, by any nation under the sun."

Never, surely, was the abiding influence of first impressions more evidently displayed than in this firm and undeviating adherence to early principle, evinced by a people remarkable for feebleness of mind, and gentleness of manners. That the fortitude, or rather torpid resignation, with which this feeble race have been observed to endure the extremity of bodily suffering, may with more justice be attributed to early inspired sentiment, than to causes merely physical, is rendered obvious by the similar operation of similar causes, on a people, whose character and manners are in other respects very widely different. That contempt of pain and death, which forms such a prominent feature in the character of the American savage, can by no means be ascribed to an organization and temperament simi-

* See Mrs. Kindersley's Letters from India.

lar to that of the Hindoo. It is explained by the honest traveller Charlevoix in a few words; when, after having given some astonishing instances, of the amazing constancy and firmness evinced by the savages of both sexes, in bearing the extreme of bodily torture, "suffering for many hours, and sometimes for many days together, the sharpest effects of fire, and all that the most industrious fury can invent to make it most painful, without letting a sigh escape;" he adds, "the savages exercise themselves in this *all their lives, and accustom their children to it from their tenderest years.* We have seen little boys and girls tie themselves together by one arm, and *tie a lighted coal between them, to see which of them would shake it off first.*"

If education can thus conquer the most powerful feelings of nature, subdue appetite, and render the soul superior to physical sensation; what may it not be expected to effect, when directed to the control of the malevolent passions, the subjection of the irregular appetites, the cultivation of benevolence, and the improvement of intellect? The pains that are taken by the Hindoo, to associate the idea of *good* with a strict adherence to the duties prescribed by his religion, and the idea of *evil* with the slightest deviation from the rules of his cast, are rendered effectual from the period of their commencement; while the associations thus produced are rendered permanent by the force of habit and example. Were the practice of the parent at war with his precepts; did he indulge himself in eating of the forbidden food, while he gave grave lessons to his children on the duty of abstaining from it; can we believe that the impressions made upon their minds would be powerful or abiding? If while *by words* he expressed his abhorence of those who,

by a breach of the laws of Brama, had lost their *cast*, he received, cherished, and caressed these degenerate beings; would all the indignation he could express, lead the witnesses of his conduct to associate the idea of *loss of cast* with irremediable disgrace? Such inconsistencies the Hindoo and the savage leave to the practice of the enlightened Christians of Europe!

To the instances I have adduced, thousands might be added from the more familiar scenes of life, to prove the infinite importance of watching over the early associations of good and evil; as on these depend the direction of the affections and desires of the heart. To this subject I mean to devote the first series of Letters. I shall then proceed to the cultivation of the Understanding; not as a separate branch of education, for it will appear evident that neither heart nor understanding can be cultivated effectually, if an exclusive attention be at any time paid to either; but I shall so divide them, for the purpose of more clear elucidation. And as I think it probable these Letters may be made public, I shall not confine myself to such topics as might merely suit the particular circumstances of my friend.

From most of the writers on education it would appear, that it is only to people of rank and fortune that education is a matter of any importance. By such alone can the systems that are generally proposed, be adopted. To such, therefore, must we believe them to be exclusively addressed. To make fine *ladies* and finished *gentlemen* forms no part of my plan, which has for its object the subjection of the passions, the direction of the affections, and the cultivation of the faculties that are common to the whole human race.

In treating of this important subject, I shall give precedence to the examination of those desires and aversions which are the springs of human conduct, because their influence commences, in some measure, with our existence. In the production of our intellectual faculties Nature operates by a slow and gradual process. When her wise regulations are attended to, and not counteracted by our officious folly, one faculty attains sufficient vigour, before another is produced to assist in its developement. But desire and aversion, which may be termed the germ of the passions, appear in the early dawn of life; and show symptoms of strength and vigour at a period when the higher intellectual faculties are yet feeble and imperfect. Hence the necessity of paying an early and unceasing attention to every circumstance which tends to call forth these active powers, which, without such superintendance, may become instrumental to the misery of the possessor.

Upon the direction given to desire and aversion, the whole of moral conduct entirely depends. And if it be by means of early and powerful associations, that the desires and aversions of the soul are principally excited; it necessarily follows, that to watch over the associations which are formed by the tender mind, becomes a duty of the first importance.

The effects of association are daily experienced by all; but as the term made use of to explain these effects may not be familiar to every reader of my own sex, a few observations upon it may not be unacceptable. This was omitted in the former edition, from a confidence that the application of the term would sufficiently explain its meaning. But in this, I find, I have been mistaken. A lady, whose

powers of wit and judgment can be excelled by nothing but her own candour and benevolence, has convinced me of my error, by assuring me that, however familiar the philosophical use of the term might be to a certain class of readers, to such as had never heard of any other *associations* than those of the *Loyal Volunteers*, it was to the last degree perplexing. Few, it is probable, are in this predicament; but for the sake of those few, it may be necessary to observe, that the associations which take place in our ideas, are seldom *volunteers*, but are united by laws that are to the last degree arbitrary; and that their union, when once formed, is no longer at the will of a superior, but frequently remains indissoluble, notwithstanding the commands issued by reason for disbanding them. A little reflection will render the truth of this observation obvious, even to the most inconsiderate.

Who could behold the spot upon which a dear friend was murdered, without the most lively sensations of horror? Why are these sensations called forth by the sight of the place? Is it not from the strength of that association, which connects the idea of the place with the idea of the horrid deed? Let any person of common sensibility say, whether the scenes which they have been accustomed to view in company with a beloved object do not, particularly after a long absence, recall that object to the mind, and introduce trains of ideas with which that object is connected? These trains of ideas are linked together by the laws of association; nor can they be broken off, but by the introduction of new associations. When the mind is perfectly at ease, and free from the influence of all violent emotions, the slightest incident will be sufficient to introduce this change; but when under the influence of passion,

the mind rejects every idea that is not clearly associated with the prevalent disposition, and the circumstances which have produced it. It is this which renders the discourses of a mind at ease so seldom salutary to the afflicted. The associations of the former are unconnected and desultory; they take a wide scope, and are easily diverted into new channels. The associations of the latter are confined by passion; and are accordingly circumscribed within narrow bounds. To be able to enter into the associations of a mind, labouring under any violent emotion, is therefore not only necessary to the poet, whose province it is to describe the passions, but to the philanthropist, who wishes to allay their fury. It is the strength of association which renders even the slightest allusion to whatever is in any degree connected with the present feelings, sufficient to rouse the energy of passion. Many fine instances of this might be given from the writings of Shakspeare, who appears to have been perfectly master of all the associations of the human mind. I shall only take notice of one passage, which will serve to illustrate what I have advanced.

The gallant Hotspur, whose ardent soul had been roused to resentment by the manner in which the monarch had demanded from him his Scottish prisoners, is represented, sometime after this transaction, in conference with his father and Worcester. In the course of the conversation, the Scottish prisoners are incidentally mentioned by Worcester. Percy catches fire at the sound; and instead of attending to the purport of his uncle's speech, calls out in indignation,

"I'll keep them all—
By heaven he shall not have a Scot of them;

No, if a Scot would save his soul, he shall not:
I'll keep them, by this hand."

Here we have a striking instance, and one that is true to nature, of the power of association. The idea of the insult he had received being so strongly connected with the idea of the Scottish prisoners, concerning whom the dispute first arose, it was impossible to hear them mentioned without bringing all the ideas associated with them into the mind. These roused the dormant passion, to which he gave vent in the ebullition of rage above cited.

The above instances may, it is hoped, suffice to give a just notion of the term *association*, applied in a philosophical sense. It may, however, be proper to observe, that it is acknowledged by many distinguished writers to be a term not perfectly appropriate, and rather made use of from necessity than choice. It has, however, the advantage of being generally adopted; and may, perhaps, on that account deserve a preference to another term, could such be found, of equal import.

The laws of association have been made use of by some writers to explain all the phenomena of the human mind; they have been made the basis of systems which have met with opposition, and of theories which are now nearly exploded. With the object of our present inquiry these are totally unconnected. The principles upon which it proceeds, are not implicitly adopted from any author, however celebrated; they are not chosen to suit any theory, however plausible. Of systems I have none, save the system of Christianity. Of theories I cannot be said to adopt any; since I follow none one step farther, than reflection upon the operations of my own mind, and observation upon those of others, fully justifies. Nor do I stand bound for *all* the opin-

ions of every author, whose sentiments I may occasionally quote. I make it a principle never to despise truth, even when it is spoken by an enemy; nor shall I ever be led to reject it, because the person by whom it is advanced, has in some points embraced opinions opposite to my own. Silently to steal the sentiments of such persons, where they happened to suit me, while I pronounced a general censure against the authors, is a line of conduct that is, in my mind, *firmly associated with the idea of dishonour*. A memory not tenacious respecting particulars may sometimes betray me into seeming ingratitude, as I am conscious that I often forget the source of information; but the same defect in the power of retention precludes me from using the exact words of any author, whose writings are not immediately before me.

The effects of association occurred to my mind, long before I was in possession of the word which I now make use of to express them. The first book in which I found a hint upon the subject, was lord Kaime's Elements of Criticism. What is there said upon it, though in some respects it met my own ideas, did not perfectly satisfy my mind; and years elapsed before I ventured to look into Locke or Hartley, whom I considered as philosophical writers, far too abstruse for my simple judgment to comprehend. Thus, my friend, are we often deterred from seeking for information, not only upon subjects which are the peculiar province of the learned, but likewise upon those points that are interesting to every rational being. In this light do I consider a knowledge of the powers and principles of the human mind; and greatly do I wish to see this subject divested of all extraneous matter, cleared from the rubbish of system and hypothesis, and render-

ed so plain to every capacity as to become a part of common education.

Till this is effected, the woman who would educate her children with success, must begin by educating herself.

She must cautiously examine her own opinions, and carefully distinguish between those which have received the sanction of reason and judgment, and such as have been implicitly adopted from the family of prejudice. She must reflect upon the motives which actuate her own conduct; and on the tempers and dispositions of her own mind. If she consider herself as an accountable agent, and that beings formed for immortality are entrusted to her care, she will set about this preliminary duty with alacrity and zeal; assured that her success will be in exact proportion to her performance of it. She must not be seduced by indolence to decline the task, as beyond her ability; but listen to the suggestions of conscience and common sense, which will not fail to convince her, that reason and reflection are within the power of every rational creature. For the exercise of these, happily, no depth of erudition is necessary. Some reading upon the subject she may indeed find expedient, as ideas may be suggested by books which her own experience and reflection may not be able to furnish: but this is no more than she would find necessary, in order to learn the principles of Whist or Cassino; for who can expect to play to advantage without a knowledge of the rules of the game? Few chess-players despise the investigation of the parties of Philidor. And here, did I not intend to disclaim the use of figure and allegory, I should be tempted to remark, as an elucidation of my argument on the importance of early education, that those who study Phi-

lidor with attention, must perceive, that the wonderful superiority of his art entirely consisted in the judicious management of the *first moves*. What is the triumph of the most skilful chess-player, or the most successful votary of cards, to that of a mother who looks round on a promising and well-educated family? Is the delightful task of observing the opening faculties, and watching over the early associations of the infant mind, less interesting to a mother's heart, than listening to the nonsense of the day, or suffering the alternation of hope and fear at the card-table? It is not probable that any who would answer in the affirmative, will ever take the trouble of perusing these Letters. I may, therefore, spare remonstrance, and proceed to submit a sketch of my plan for your approbation.

It is my wish to be as concise as possible. But though I shall for this reason avoid all unnecessary amplification, I must, when the elucidation of the subject requires it, beg your patient attention to minute detail; as it is by a reference to facts alone, that the danger of systematizing and arguing from mere hypothesis can be avoided. As I shall be much more solicitous to convince than to amuse, you are not to expect from me those beauties of style, and that profusion of imagery, which adorn the works of some admired writers of my own sex on the same subject: For though I am sensible that these ornaments diffuse a charm over the pages of the author; I am not so certain, that they do not distract the reader's attention, and break the chain of reasoning, so as to leave upon the mind an imperfect idea of its connecting links.

The first thing I shall urge, is the absolute necessity of contemplating with attention, and defining with accuracy, *what is the real object we wish by*

education to accomplish. If this be not well ascertained, if we have any vague ideas concerning it, we have no reason to flatter ourselves with hopes of success in the event. It appears to me, that to a want of precise notions with regard to our ultimate views in education, may fairly be traced many of those heavy disappointments, of which parents so often and so bitterly complain.

If, on examining our own minds, we find that we have no other object in education, than to make our children excel in those fashionable accomplishments which will enable them to appear to advantage in the polite world; if, in our apprehension, all that is valuable be comprised in the word *genteel*; much unnecessary trouble may be spared. The *common* education of the nursery may then be considered as a very good preparative for the *common* education of the boarding-school; and as the culture of the heart and of the understanding would but counteract our designs, they may safely be left out of the account. To engage the taste and the imagination in our interest, will be an easy task. Fashion will be the *preceptress* of our pupils; and she is so engaging a mistress to young minds, that they will easily be brought to yield implicit obedience to her authority. Beneath her plastic hand, both sons and daughters will be formed to our wish. They will soon be qualified by her precepts for all that is required of them. They will be prepared

"To frisk their hour upon the stage,"

perhaps with some eclat. But if minds that have been embued with no solid principles of virtue should become the prey of vice, let us not be astonished. Let us not express the feelings of regret and disappointment at a consequence so natur-

al. That it is not only natural, but inevitable, a little reflection will evince. For though to train them to vice made no part of our design—so far from it, that we, perhaps, can call many a weary hour to witness what pains we took to lecture them to virtue—yet we must confess, the early associations that gave an exclusive preference for whatever was genteel, to have been the operating principle of their minds. The ideas connected with the word genteel may, in the mind of the mother, comprise all that is elegant, and all that is virtuous, in polished life ; but to these may easily be added, in the minds of the children, pride and vanity, luxury and voluptuousness, contempt of all that is serious and sacred, and selfishness which knows not how to forego present gratification. Would to God, the fatal consequences of these associations had only their existence in the teeming brain of a visionary recluse ! But, alas, the register of Doctors'-Commons, the coroner's records, and the tears of families overwhelmed with shame from the misconduct of once-promising relatives, leave us no room to doubt of their melancholy truth.

Could we, indeed, reduce the child to a mere automaton ; could we teach it to dance, and dress, and play, and sing, as the only business of existence ; and while we did so, totally arrest the operation of the mind, and prevent the association of ideas, we might safely pursue our plan. But since this is not in our power ; since the ever-active principle must proceed in its course ; we have no alternative but to direct that course either to truth or error. If the strength of our own prejudices lean towards the latter ; if, by our conduct and our expressions of delight and complacency, we have

taught them to associate the idea of *good* with what is in its nature *evil;* and, by our manifest indifference or contempt, taught them to associate the idea of *evil* with what is in its nature *good;* we ought not to be surprised, if the assoc ations thus produced should lead to consequences beyond our calculation : Nor need we wonder, if the vehemence of desires thus engendered should, according to the predominance of vanity or appetite, either run the full career of folly, or sink into the depths of vice.

To expose the absurdity of making mere personal accomplishments the exclusive object of attention, is an easy task; but it is, perhaps, an error little less fatal in its consequences, to direct the attention *solely* to the cultivation of the understanding, while we neglect the heart. Whoever considers the operation of the passions, and the influence of the affections upon the happiness of individuals and of society, must be sensible, that if these do not receive a proper direction in early life, the acquisition of knowledge will never render a man "wise unto happiness or unto virtue, more than unto salvation."

If, upon taking these things into consideration, we acquire a proper view of the necessity of perfecting the intellectual and moral powers of our children, we shall adopt the means best suited to views so comprehensive. If we consider, with an amiable and enlightened philosopher,* the object of education to be "first, to cultivate the various principles of our nature, both speculative and active, in such a manner as to bring them to the greatest perfection of which they are susceptible; and secondly, by watching over the impressions and associa-

* Professor Stewart. See his introduction to the Elements of Philosophy of the Human Mind, p. 20.

tions which the mind receives in early life, to secure it against the influence of prevailing errors, and as far as possible to engage its prepossessions on the side of truth ;" the importance of the object will command our attention, and our anxiety to accomplish it will prompt to vigorous exertion.

I remain, yours.

LETTER II.

Objections stated.—Shown, in answer, that associations are deeply fixed in the mind, either by means of strong impressions or frequent repetition.—Associations of the former class are generally those of aversion. —Examples.

Before I proceed to a further investigation of the subject with which I concluded my last, I shall fully reply to the objections you have so candidly stated.

You say, that "without having ever read a page of metaphysics, you can easily comprehend what I mean by the associations of ideas. But it appears to you, that I have laid too great a stress upon the strength of those that are given in infancy ; as experience may convince us, that the impressions received in that early period are slight and evanescent ; that the pleasures and pains of childhood are not the pleasures and pains of our riper years, and that this change of the objects of desire or aversion shows the early association of ideas to have been slight and transient."

That thousands of casual associations are of this description, I readily admit ; and I believe, on close and accurate examination we shall find that the

permanency of associations depends, in the first place, on *the strength of the original impression*, and secondly, *on the frequency of the repetition*.

To give an instance of each kind. First, that the strength of the impression occasions the associations to be indelibly fixed in the mind. Of this we have a convincing proof in the number of persons who are unhappily through life slaves to the terrors of darkness, from the idea of ghosts and darkness having been associated together in infancy, and forcibly impressed by means of the passion of fear. Long after reason has pointed out the absurdity of this association ; long after the belief in apparitions has ceased to be a part of the creed ; has this association continued to operate upon the mind, and to many a brave man, and many a sensible woman, proved a last source of misery and disquiet.

This is now so well known, that servants are generally cautioned against frightening children by those foolish stories which were once so current in every nursery. But is the fear of ghosts and hobgoblins the only false and permanent association of which the mind is at that early period susceptible ? Alas ! a thousand others of no less fatal tendency are often then received, engendering prejudices no less dangerous and indelible.

That all our desires are associated with the ideas of pleasure, and all our aversions with those of pain, no one who gives the least observation to what passes in his own mind, or that of others, can doubt. These associations take place at an early period, for it is by means of them that a child learns to distinguish the voice of praise from that of chiding. The pleasurable sensation excited by praise gives rise to self-complacency ; and the idea of the plea-

sure experienced from it will not fail to be associated with the circumstances by which it has been most frequently produced ; inclining the child to a repetition of the same mode of conduct for which it has been already praised. The idea of pleasure attached to the gratification of self-will is, however, so much more lively in early life than any other association, that it will, if not properly guarded against, counteract even the love of praise. You desire your little girl to fetch a book from the other end of the room : she obeys, and is caressed and praised for her ready obedience. Thus pleasure becomes associated with obedience. But perhaps in an hour after, you desire her to give up a favourite plaything, and go to bed. The pleasure she derives from her amusement will here oppose itself to the pleasure derived from your approbation ; and if the association of pleasure with the gratification of self-will has not already been broken, and the desire subdued, there is no doubt but it will here prevail, and triumph over the pleasure of obedience. When the desire of gratifying self-will does not interpose, the association of praise and pleasure will recover its influence, and the pleasurable idea connected with praise be extended to all its attending circumstances. For instance, let your little girl be dressed in new and unusual finery, and brought into company, where every voice shall join in praise of the ornaments with which she has been decorated. Observe the satisfaction with which she eyes the pretty shoes and pretty sash, which are the objects of praise and admiration. The idea of praise may thus be associated with the idea of finery, and thus, no doubt, may the love of dress be generated ; but that it will remain permanent without many re-

petitions of the first impression is, I think, a conclusion which experience does not justify. The first impression would be equally strong on the mind of a boy or girl ; but on the mind of a boy it will not long have influence, being early and effectually counteracted. On the mind of the poor girl, on the contrary, it may be deeply impressed ; for she is unhappily exposed to a daily repetition of the same association, and can, therefore, have little chance of escaping its pernicious influence.

From these remarks it appears evident, that the early associations to which our attention ought chiefly to be directed ; which we must most scrupulously examine, and assiduously watch ; are, first, those which are powerfully impressed by means of strong sensation ; and secondly, those which are fixed by means of frequent repetition. If these are properly guarded against, I think we need be under no apprehension concerning those slight and transient associations, to which, by a certain class of philosophers, so much has been attributed.

To be able to examine and to decide on the tendency of impressions, does, indeed, seem to require a knowledge of the human mind, which few mothers in the common path of life can be supposed to possess. I say *seem* to require : for in reality it requires nothing more than strict attention to the subject, directed by that experience which a knowledge of one's own mind, and common observation on the characters of others, must bestow. The more enlightened our understandings, the more enlarged the sphere of our observations ; with so much greater facility shall we be enabled to trace, with so much greater certainty to decide on, the consequences of associations. But it is not to want of knowledge or ability that our deficiency is

most commonly to be ascribed. It is our own indolence, our own selfishness, our unwillingness to counteract our own prejudices, that prevent us from applying to the subject the degree of understanding and information we possess. For a standard whereby to judge of the tendency of associations, no Christian mother can be at a loss. She, indeed, whose notions of religion extend a little farther than to the mere forms of the sect in which she was educated, will here be found to possess a very great advantage. In the morality of the Gospel she has an excellent criterion ; and if she conscientiously endeavours to prevent all associations in the minds of her children that are at variance with its precepts, she lays the most probable foundation for their future happiness.

The system of morality established by Jesus Christ does, indeed, in many respects, differ essentially from the morality of the world. But till it can be proved that the latter is better suited for advancing the dignity of our nature ; is better calculated for promoting individual and social happiness ; I do not scruple to give a decided preference to the former. To it, therefore, should I endeavour to form the mind. By it should I try the habits, the prejudices, (for they can scarcely be called opinions) that are acquired in infancy ; and while I did so, I would submit my own prejudices, my own opinions, to the same test. " There are few individuals (says Stewart) whose education has been conducted in every respect with attention and judgment. Almost every man of reflection is conscious, when he arrives at maturity, of many defects in his mental powers, and of many inconvenient habits, which might have been prevented or remedied in his infancy or youth. Such a consciousness is the

first step towards improvement; and the person who feels it, if he is possessed of resolution and steadiness, will not scruple to begin a new course of education for himself. It is never too late (he adds) to think of the improvement of our faculties." It is never too late, I would add, to examine our opinions with attention; so that we may be able to discriminate between those which have been adopted by the understanding on a rational conviction of their truth, and those that are the offspring of false associations deeply impressed upon our minds in early life. Without such an examination of our opinions, we shall, in educating our children, be but perpetuating the reign of prejudice and error. If even in our religious sentiments or feelings there are any that will not stand the test I have mentioned,* though we may not immediately be able to detect their fallacy, we ought, at least, to beware of inculcating them; lest by associating with the sacred name of religion, false and injurious impressions of the Deity, or malevolence and ill-will towards any part of his creation, we inadvertently lay the foundation of a blind and superstitious bigotry, or perhaps of that very scepticism against which we, with so much zeal, but so little judgment, attempt to guard.

The power of association over the mental faculties is extremely obvious: but I shall postpone the consideration of it, till we come to treat of the cultivation of the understanding; and at present confine myself to an examination of those early asso-

* "There can be nothing in the genuine *sentiment*, or *feelings occasioned by the spirit of God*, which is not friendly to man, improving to his nature, and cooperating with all that sound philosophy and benignant laws have ever done to advance the happiness of the human race." See Dr. Knox's admirable treatise of Christian Philosophy, vol. ii. p. 254.

ciations which affect the heart.* The influence of these has not, I believe, been generally attended to so much as the importance of the subject seems to require. Love and hatred are the great springs of human action. In their various modifications, they give rise to every passion and affection of the human soul ; and according to the objects with which they are associated, and to the passions which they produce, will vice or virtue predominate in the character of the individual. (A)† How far the primary passions of love and hatred, with their several dependent passions, may be, and actually are, influenced by early association, it shall now be my endeavour to explain by the most obvious and familiar examples.

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By tracing the rise of the malevolent passions to the earliest stage of life, I shall, as I hope, give a powerful incentive to maternal vigilance ; and by showing how the benevolent affections may, at the same early period, be inspired, I give a new motive to maternal virtue. Such at least is the glorious aim I have in view ; and were all mothers possessed with the same zeal for the happiness of their offspring as is felt by my friend, I should not despair of its accomplishment.

Adieu.

* The reader will observe, that in making the heart the seat of the passions, I make use of the popular language, without contending for its propriety ; it is sufficient for my purpose, that it is intelligible.

† See Note 1st, at the end of the volume.

LETTER III.

Examination of the associations which produce passions of the malevolent class.—Consequences of early impressions of terror.—The nature of timidity investigated.—The fear of death, the consequences of early association.—Examples.

THE first class of associations that comes under our consideration, are those which are rendered permanent by means of strong sensation. These are chiefly, if not entirely, of the painful kind; the sensations that excite aversion being much stronger than those which produce pleasure; and as hatred is the source of all the malevolent passions, and gives rise to all the malevolent dispositions of our nature, every association which produces it, is particularly deserving of our attention.

That the infant mind is at an early period susceptible of terror, is a discovery unhappily made by every ignorant nurse. This instinct, implanted by the wise Creator as a protection to the helpless state of infancy, is an instrument in the hands of senseless ignorance—too frequently applied to the worst of purposes. It is the first, the constant engine of tyranny. In proportion as it is made to operate, the mind will be debased and enfeebled; deprived of its power and energy, it will remain the willing slave of sensation.

In one of the woes denounced against a sinful people in scripture, it is declared by the Prophet, "*that they shall be afraid where no fear is.*" I can scarcely form an idea of greater calamity; and yet to this calamity is many an innocent being exposed by the injudicious treatment of the nursery. Of the many unhappy methods employed to induce a quiet submission to the arbitrary decrees of the

nurse, notice has been taken in a work of such deserved celebrity, that I must suppose you are acquainted with its contents.* However I may take the liberty of differing in some points from the able and ingenious authors of that judicious treatise, I consider it, upon the whole, as an inestimable treasure of useful hints and sensible observations; and, therefore earnestly recommend it to your attentive perusal. In the chapter to which I have alluded, the injudicious method employed to quiet the clamours which have been injudiciously excited, are considered with regard to their tendency towards hurting the temper. In addition to this evil of mighty magnitude, I consider the frequent employment of the engine of terror, as having a tendency to debilitate the powers of the mind, and to introduce malevolence and selfishness into the dispositions of the heart.

Timidity, when considered merely as an enemy to vigorous exertion, will be found an obstacle to every species of excellence; as by fettering the mind it is particularly friendly to prejudice, and inimical to truth. That self-possession which seems the inheritance of great minds, is, in reality, but the triumph of reason over the passions of surprise and fear; which on no emergency can be promptly conquered by minds accustomed to the early dominion of terror. It surely, then, is our business to guard as much as possible against the early introduction of a passion which is in its excess equally injurious to happiness and virtue.

"This may be all very truly observed," you will perhaps, say, "with regard to boys; but in females timidity appears so graceful and engaging,

* Edgeworth on Practical Education. See the chapter on Toy's.

that in them it ought by all means to be encouraged."

I beg your pardon; I thought we were speaking of the best method of cultivating the powers of *human beings*, so as to bring them to the greatest perfection of which they are capable; and of watching over the impressions and associations of early life, so as to preserve it from the influence of prevailing errors.* In this I can make no distinction of sex; it being my opinion, that the mind which is most sedulously preserved from the influence of prejudice, will be best prepared for pursuing the line of conduct best adapted to its situation and circumstances. Females are, indeed, seldom placed in those where the exertion of *active* courage is required. Whatever is unnecessary is absurd; the affectation of it is disgusting. But of that passive courage which takes the name of fortitude, where is the woman, who, in some period of life, is not called on for its exertion?

By the delicacy of her frame exposed to inevitable suffering from bodily pain, ought not her mind to be strengthened to support it with firmness? Unhappy the friends, doubly unhappy the attendants, who are doomed to listen to the querulous murmurs of *amiable weakness*, under the pressure of bodily infirmity! Here, I believe, it would be readily excused, even by the most strenuous advocate for the charms of feminine imbecility. But having once deprived the mind of strength and energy, we must take all the consequences: of these the incapacity of supporting pain with any degree of firmness is, perhaps, not the worst. The selfishness almost always connected with extreme timidity

* See Letter I.

of temper is a consequence we should still more strongly deprecate. Active benevolence requires a degree of resolution, a dereliction of *self*, to which the timid can never attain. Let us compare the two by examples from real life.

Is it an uncommon thing to see a lady, who is the slave of foolish fears with regard to her own personal safety, show very little concern for the safety of others? I have seen one who, if a cow but looked at her in her walks, would scream with terror, and run from it as she would from a Bengal tiger: yet, with great *sang froid*, permit her child to face the formidable animal, and turn it from the path!

It is the nature of cowardice and pusillanimity to direct the mind exclusively to the attention of *self*. On a mind thus occupied, the sufferings of others can make no impression; nor can the social or sympathetic affections in such circumstances exert their influence over the heart. How mistaken is it then, to confound the idea of *gentleness*, of which the feelings of benevolence and complacency are the constituents, with that cowardice which is the consequence of an unmixt regard to self!

Permit me to illustrate the union of gentleness and fortitude by an apt example, with which my memory now furnishes me.

Mrs. B.—a lady whose gentleness arose from the pure source of Christian meekness and unbounded philanthropy—after having suffered with unrepining patience the painful progress of a cancer, was advised to submit to an operation, from which a faint hope of cure was entertained by her medical friends. It happened, that one of her servants (I believe her kitchenmaid) had, about the same time,

contracted a white swelling on her knee, for which amputation was pronounced the only remedy. During the progress of her disorder, Mrs. B. took infinite pains to strengthen the weaker mind of her fellow-sufferer, and to bring her to that calm resignation to the Divine will, of which she was herself so bright an example. At length the day appointed for the performance of the two operations arrived. The amiable mistress, who was mother of a large family, spent the morning in giving such admonitions to her children, and such instructions concerning them, as were suggested by a sound understanding, a pious mind, and a benevolent heart. But not even the affecting idea of a last interview (for so she considered it) with her beloved children could so far conquer her feelings as to render her forgetful of the poor sufferer above-stairs, whose feeble mind was in agonies of apprehension, at the near prospect of the dreaded event. She sent to her several messages of consolation before the arrival of the surgeons, and after she had with heroic fortitude endured the cruel torture of an unsuccessful operation, the first, almost the only words she uttered, were to desire an attendant to inform Peggy, *that the pain was not nearly so great as she had expected!* Let us compare the magnanimity of this conduct with the selfish concern of a dastardly and timid spirit, and declare to which of the two we should give the preference. If the former has any claim upon our admiration and esteem, we shall not hesitate about the propriety of preserving our girls as well as boys, from the dominion of feelings which destroy energy, and impair benevolence.

Let the gentleness of the female mind be such as springs from a genuine and proper source. It will then be connected not with the cruel family of

hatred to which fear is allied, but with that of humility, meekness, and modesty. For let it ever be remembered, that every strong impression which the mind receives, disposes it to the reception of kindred impressions; and that as love, hope, joy, and all the amiable passions and affections enhance each other; so do the ungrateful and unamiable ones of fear, hatred, and aversion with all their odious attendants of suspicion, jealousy and revenge.

Timidity is by some considered as not only graceful in the female character, but as *necessary*, to prevent the consequences of that rashness to which girls may be exposed by their inexperience of the world. For this I consider humility, and its companion diffidence, to be infinitely more effectual. Timidity, as far as I have been able to observe, has generally been rather productive of rashness. Where the affections are interested, it requires no small degree of *courage* to examine all the possible consequences of a material step. At these the timid dare not look. Obstinately shutting their eyes, they blindly leap into the gulph, and often, alas! do they perceive, when it is too late, that cowardice impelled their ruin.

Another effect of extreme timidity of temper is, in a moral view, well worthy of our attentive consideration. *The timid seldom will be found sincere.* Cunning is the constant refuge of cowardice; it is the despicable weapon of pusillanimous minds to counteract what they dare not openly oppose. How contemptible is the tergiversation so often detected in those who from timidity applaud that which in their hearts they condemn! Into what deplorable dilemmas are the rash and timid frequently betrayed! The character of Saint Peter, as given in the

Gospels, is a beautiful example. Nor is he, alas, the only one whom timidity has betrayed to actions for which they have had cause to "*weep bitterly.*"

That cowardice may sometimes be a constitutional defect, I cannot take upon me to deny; but that it is often an adventitious and acquired one, I think we may venture to assert; and as it may frequently be traced to strong impressions made on the infant mind, producing associations that are permanent and indelible, we must allow that it has a sufficient claim upon our attention.

"But how is it possible," you will say, "to guard against the improper conduct of nurses, and nursery-maids? One cannot be always with one's children."

The watchful eye of a prudent mother may do much. Convince your servants, that to preserve your children from the influence of terror is an object of importance in your mind: attentively observe the first appearance of its effects, nor let it pass without an examination into the cause: make them sensible from experience that children may be prevented from touching what is hurtful, by other means than telling them *it will bite them*: and that making it a constant rule never to give them what they obstinately cry for, will be found a far more efficacious remedy, than to call for the old man or the black dog, who is to come down the chimney for naughty children. And here it may be worthy of consideration, how far the moral as well as physical faculties may be injured by the common mode of nursery education. To allure or to frighten them into a compliance with our will, we equally employ a system of falsehood, and then we expect them to speak the truth! If symptoms of a contrary disposition appear at an early period,

we never advert to the thousand lies they have from the cradle heard us utter, many of which were too palpable to escape the detection of even infantine sagacity ; we never consider the associations we have thus excited, but immediately lay all the blame upon poor human nature ! Without entering into any controversy concerning original depravity, I think I may venture to assert, that managing children by the arts of deceit and falsehood in infancy is a bad preparative for those lessons on truth, which we are afterwards at so much pains to impress. But this will come to be considered with more propriety hereafter. Let us now return to the subject of terror, which I consider of too much importance to be yet dismissed.

Having discarded from our service all imaginary instruments of vengeance, you will perhaps apprehend, that the children may become unmanageable ; and from their want of experience, and from the possession of that courage which has never been repressed, may expose themselves to danger. To avoid this, you perhaps have anticipated my proposal of a constant watchful attendance upon all their steps ; a servant always at their heels, to move where they move, and to be ever ready to explain, with vociferous exclamation, that the knife will cut, the fire will burn, and the water will drown, the pretty dears ! If you imagine I intend to advise this, you are deceived ; for all this necessary information I would have the pretty dears derive from their own experience. At the risk of very little personal inconvenience, they will soon learn it more effectually than by the silly precautions of a servant. Her exclamatory admonitions can only give a vague indeterminate idea of danger from

these objects, which, from the little confidence experience has probably taught them to place in her veracity, may possibly make but a slight impression; or if it makes a forcible one, that impression must be the general association of terror with the object, without a discriminating apprehension of the cause why that terror is excited. The impression received from a slight burn or cut, will not only be more durable, but will give such distinct ideas of the nature of the object that inflicts them, as can neither injure the mind by false images of terror, nor permit it a second time to suffer from the temerity of ignorance.

Children being early accustomed to paddle their hands in cold water with impunity, cannot easily be made to comprehend the nature of the danger they are told to dread in meddling with hot. The painted figure upon the china cup, they have been told would bite them, if they touched it; but they have ventured, and contrary to the assertion of the nurse, have touched it without injury. Little confidence can they, therefore, place in what she advances. From the smoking of the hot water alone they cannot learn its nature; but by giving the finger such a slight dip into it as occasions some degree of pain, it becomes at once intelligible. How many shocking accidents might be thus prevented! A child who from experience knew the nature of the danger that awaited him, would not rashly overturn a tea-urn, or set his little frock on fire.

I once saw a gentleman (very wisely as I thought, though very cruelly in the opinion of some others of the spectators) dip his son, then a boy in petticoats, into a pond in the garden, which had long been a subject of disquiet to the anxious mother; who had observed her darling's predilection for this

favourite spot. In spite of her remonstrances and injunctions, no sooner did this infant Narcissus find himself at liberty, than he ran to the side of the pond, and kneeling down stretched over to view the pretty baby in the water. In this position he was found by his father; who taking him up in his arms, and explaining to him the nature of his danger, calmly told him he should now judge for himself of the truth of what he said, and then very deliberately plunged him into the water; by which seeming cruelty, it is more than probable he saved the life of his child.

Let a child who has been instructed in the nature of danger from his own experience, but whose mind has never been weakened by repeated sensations of terror; and one whose infant education has been conducted upon principles exactly contrary; be both for the first time presented with a new and striking object. Observe the grave and penetrating looks of the former, while he sagaciously examines the appearance of the object before him, in order to form a judgment of its qualities. After having looked at it on every side, he ventures, though with much caution, to submit it to his touch. Finding it every way harmless, he becomes reconciled to it, and dismisses all apprehension. While the poor infant who has been accustomed to quake at unknown phantoms presented to his imagination, associates this strong, though undefined, idea of evil with every new object of uncommon appearance, and without venturing on examination, gives vent to his feelings in shrieks and lamentations. Are the minds of these two children equally prepared for entering on that most material part of education which must be derived from experience? How many sources of information are open to the one,

which to the other are by his fears shut up! And is it not probable that a great and decided difference will mark their characters through life?

If we analyze the slavish fear of death, which constitutes no trifling portion of human misery, we shall often find it impossible to be accounted for on any other grounds than those of early association. Frequently does this slavish fear operate in the bosoms of those who know not the pangs of an accusing conscience, and whose spirits bear them witness that they have reason to have hope and confidence towards God. But in vain does reason and religion speak peace to the soul of him whose first ideas of death have been accompanied with strong impressions of terror. The association thus formed is too powerful to be broken, and the only resource to which minds under its influence generally resort, is to drive the subject from their thoughts as much as possible. To this cause we may attribute the unwillingness which many people evince towards making a settlement of their affairs; not that they entertain the superstitious notion of accelerating the hour of their death by making a will; but that the aversion to the subject of death is so strong in their minds, that they feel a repugnance to the consideration of whatever is even remotely connected with it.

How often the same association operates in deterring from the serious contemplation of a future state, we must leave to the consciences of individuals to determine. Its tendency to enfeeble the mind, and its consequences in detracting from the happiness of life, are obvious to common observation; but as every subject of this nature is best elucidated by examples, I shall beg leave to introduce two

from real life, in which the importance of early association will, I trust, be clearly illustrated.

The first instance I shall give of the abiding influence of strong impressions received in infancy, is in the character of a lady who is now no more ; and who was too eminent for piety and virtue, to leave any doubt of her being now exalted to the enjoyment of that felicity which her enfeebled mind, during its abode on earth, never dared to contemplate. The first view she had of death in infancy was accompanied with peculiar circumstances of terror, and this powerful impression was, by the injudicious language of the nursery, aggravated and increased, till the idea of death became associated with all the images of horror which the imagination could conceive. Although born of a noble family, her education was strictly pious ; but the piety which she witnessed was tinctured with fanaticism, and had little in it of that divine spirit of " love which casteth out fear." Her understanding was naturally excellent ; or, in other words, what is in our sex generally termed masculine ; and it was improved by the advantages of a very superior education. But not all the advantages she derived from nature or cultivation, not all the strength of a sound judgment, nor all the sagacity of a penetrating and cultivated genius, could counteract the association which rendered the idea of death a subject of perpetual terror to her mind. Exemplary in the performance of every religious and every social duty, full of faith and of good works, she never dared to dart a glance of hope beyond the tomb. The gloomy shadows that hovered over the regions of death made the heart recoil from the salutary meditation ; and when sickness brought the subject to her view, her whole soul was involved in a tumult of horror and dismay.

In every illness it became the business of her family and friends to devise methods of concealing from her the real danger. Every face was then dressed in forced smiles, and every tongue employed in the repetition of flattering falsehoods. To mention the death of any person in her presence became a sort of petit treason in her family; and from the pains that were taken to conceal every event of this kind from her knowledge, it was easy to conjecture how much was to be dreaded from the direful effect such information would infallibly produce. She might, indeed, be said,

"To die a thousand deaths in fearing one."

And had often suffered much more from the apprehension, than she could have suffered from the most agonizing torture that ever attended the hour of dissolution.

Here we have an instance of a noble mind subjected by means of early association to the most cruel bondage. Let us now take a view of the consequences of impressing the mind with more agreeable associations on the same subject at the same early period.

A friend of mine, on expressing his admiration of the cheerfulness and composure which a lady of his acquaintance had invariably shown on the threatened approach of death, was thus answered: "The fortitude you so highly applaud, I indeed acknowledge as the first and greatest of blessings; for to it I owe the enjoyment of all the mercies which a good Providence has graciously mingled in the cup of suffering. But I take no merit to myself on its account. It is not, as you suppose, the magnanimous effort of reason; and however it may be supported by that religious principle which in-

spires hope, and teaches resignation, while I see those who are my superiors in every Christian grace and virtue appalled by the terrors of death, I cannot to religion alone attribute my superior fortitude. For that fortitude I am, under God, chiefly indebted to the judicious friend of my infancy, who made the idea of death not only familiar but pleasant to my imagination. The sudden death of an elderly lady to whom I was much attached, gave her an opportunity, before I had attained my sixth year, of impressing this subject on my mind in the most agreeable colours.

"To this judicious management do I attribute much of that serenity, which, on the apprehended approach of death, has ever possessed my mind. Had the idea been first impressed upon my imagination with its usual gloomy accompaniments, it is probable that it would still have been there invested in robes of terror; nor would all the efforts of reason, nor all the arguments of religion, have been able in these moments effectually to tranquillize my soul. Nor is it only in the hour of real danger that I have experienced the good effects of this freedom from the slavish fear of death; it has saved me from a thousand petty alarms and foolish apprehensions, into which people of stronger minds than I can boast, are frequently betrayed by the involuntary impulse of terror. So much, my good friend, do we all owe to early education."

I am afraid I must already have appeared tedious, from the various lights in which I have thought it necessary to place a subject that seems to me worthy of more attention than is generally bestowed upon it; but the consequences of early impres-

sions are of too serious a nature to be lightly dismissed.

Philosophy had no sooner explained the optical defect of squinting, than a reformation took place in every nursery, and the position of every cradle was carefully attended to. Is the mind, then, so comparatively unimportant? Or are the impressions made upon it by strong and powerful sensation, to a certainty, less durable than those made upon the optic nerve? A very little reflection will convince us of the contrary.

Adieu.

LETTER IV.

ASSOCIATIONS OF AVERSION CONTINUED.

Danger of early inspired antipathies.—The nature of prejudice examined.—Its injurious effects upon the mind.—Examples and observations.

Having noticed, at sufficient length, the effect of those violent sensations of terror which are too often inflicted on the infant mind, let us now discuss the subject of aversions and antipathies to particular objects which we have been accustomed, without hesitation, to attribute to Nature.

When we take a view of the instinctive faculties of animals, and observe how admirably they are adapted to the preservation of the species and the individual, according to its situation and circumstances: and when we consider how much, in the infancy of society, Man must be inevitably exposed to danger, from the bite of noxious animals; it does not, at first view, seem inconsistent with the order

of Providence, that he should be provided with a similar defence, and be taught by natural antipathy to avoid what is hurtful. But is this actually the case? And does it not rather appear, that the principle of imitation, so deeply implanted in our natures, and so suited to the circumstances of man as a social animal, is intended by our wise Creator, as a substitute for that instinct in which the inferior orders of creation have so much the advantage of us? That this is indeed the case, evidently, as I think, appears from the conduct of individuals; which, with regard to the objects of aversion, is so far from being guided by the steady and unerring impulse of instinct, that it most frequently seems the offspring of unaccountable caprice. To those, indeed, who have observed the power of sympathy and the influence of imitation, it will not be unaccountable. Let a child see a frog for the first time in company with a person who has no aversion to the species, who praises the beauty of its skin, admires its agility, and mentions its inoffensiveness with sympathy and tenderness; the child will be delighted with its appearance, and attach to it no more idea of disgust than he does to that of a robin-redbreast. But alter these circumstances, and let him at the first sight of the frog hear a shriek of terror from his mamma, or some female friend; let him see her run from it with abhorrence and hear her mention it with disgust, and it is ten to one the association thus formed will remain fixed for life.

While sitting in an alcove in a friend's garden last summer, I saw a darling little girl, whose mind had been happily preserved from the early dominion of prejudice, busily employed in collecting

pebbles (as I thought) and putting them in her frock, which she had gathered up and held in one hand as a receptacle for her treasure. Observing me, she came running towards me with a joyful countenance; "See!" cried she, "see! what a number of beautiful creatures I have got here!" emptying at the same time the contents of her lap upon mine—a number of large black beetles! I confess I could have excused the present; nor could I behold the harmless creatures crawling on me, without shuddering. I had however resolution enough to conceal my sensations; and after thanking my little friend for her kindness, begged she would replace them in her frock, that she might put them down where she had found them, so that they might find their way to their families. Delighted with the employment, in which I could not prevail on myself to assist her, she soon freed me from my disagreeable companions; and while I watched the expression of her animated countenance, I could not help reflecting on the injury I had sustained from that early association which could still thus operate upon my mind in defiance of the control of reason. An aversion to black beetles, it is true, will not often interfere with our happiness, or with the comfort of those with whom we associate; but why, in any instance, should we injure the mind by false and fictitious prejudices? The recurrence of these painful sensations, and what sensations more painful than those of fear and aversion? deduct much from the pleasure of life. They mislead the understanding and warp the judgment, and are consequently injurious to the sanity of the mind; and yet how little are they guarded against in education? Suffer me, then, my Friend, to recommend it to your con-

sideration. Watch, I beseech you, the early operation of the mind; and if you observe any symptom of its having caught by contagion any of those antipathies so falsely denominated *natural*, make it your business, by counteracting, to destroy the association which excited them. In the education of brutes we see this done every day with success; and, indeed, from the education of brutes many useful hints on the subject of association might be derived; nor where they offer, ought we to scorn to avail ourselves of them. (B)*

Besides these false and foolish antipathies to certain objects of sense, which are at an early period fixed in the mind, there are others more indistinct and undefined, which, instead of guarding against, we are often at pains to instil for our amusement, without considering the consequences to which they may probably lead.

Before we proceed to their investigation, it may be proper to make a few previous remarks on the nature and tendency of prejudice in general.

Prejudice may, I think, be defined, to be desire or aversion attached to certain objects or opinions by means of strong but unexamined associations. To render virtue the object of love, and vice the object of hatred, is the aim and end of moral education. But if infinite pains be not taken to guard the mind against hasty and precipitate judgments, it will often associate with the ideas of vice and virtue circumstances that are foreign and indifferent; and by this means, love and hatred will be improperly called forth.

The religious and political opinions of the greater part of mankind having been embraced without

* See Note 2d, at the end of the volume.

much previous examination, are persevered in merely by means of their having been strongly associated with the ideas of propriety, utility, or truth. Accustomed from infancy to consider the sect or party in which we have been educated, as the most perfect, or rather as the compendium of all perfection, we attach the idea of wrong to all who have embraced opinions that are opposite. Nor are the exclusive ideas of *right* and *wrong* confined to opinions or principles; they extend to every non-essential form and ceremony, which custom has established in our own sect, or rendered peculiar to others. The more we examine this point, we shall be the more convinced that it is from association alone, that non-essential forms and ceremonies derive their importance.

The operation of this principle, in a cultivated and benevolent mind, will produce an involuntary preference of the established forms and ceremonies to which it has been accustomed, without influencing the judgment to a belief of their absolute superiority. But where, by means of early association, the idea of *evil* has been strongly connected with opinions opposite to our own, the same association will extend its influence to every minute circumstance; rendering forms and ceremonies, that are in themselves either laudable or indifferent, obnoxious and hateful. Where the sphere of observation is much confined, these prejudices take such deep root in the heart, as appears surprising to those whose minds have been liberalized by a more extensive intercourse with the world. They, indeed, behold the operations of prejudice on a grander scale: for every day presents them with opportunities of observing its baleful influence on

the peace, the virtue, and the happiness of society. (c)*

As all the passions are strengthened by sympathy, the associations which produce hatred and ill-will, become more powerful and more pernicious in society than in retirement. The man who in his individual capacity, would shudder at cruelty or injustice, does not scruple to defend the cruelty and injustice exercised by the party he has espoused. In every party dispute, "partiality and prejudice act and re-act like the waves of the troubled sea, until they are worked up to a tremendous storm:"† a storm, which, alas! too frequently overwhelms the purest innocence and most exalted virtue!

The influence of the passions upon the opinions belongs to another part of my subject; it is sufficient for my present purpose to show, that the first ideas of right and wrong may, by means of false and improper associations, be productive of personal hatred; and to encourage personal hatred, is to introduce into the disposition a tendency to all the malevolent passions.

When reason is heard, and religion exerts its influence in our breasts, we do not scruple to acknowledge, that *from every idea of perfection, the idea of malevolence is totally excluded.* We likewise confess, that every degree of benevolence becomes a proportional source of happiness to the benevolent: nay, that in unbounded benevolence the moral attributes of the Supreme Being are comprehended; but such is the powerful influence of

* See Note 3d, at the end of the volume.

† Cogan.

early prejudice, that we applaud ourselves as exercising a virtuous indignation against vice, in our indiscriminate hatred of all who differ from us; without reflecting that by thus indulging the spirit of malevolence, we are rendering ourselves guilty in the eyes of that Being, in whose service we erroneously imagine our zeal to be exerted.

Nor is a disposition to prejudice less inimical to the cultivation of the mental faculties, than to the exercise of the moral. Few people who have made any progress in the improvement of their understandings, will hesitate to acknowledge, that they have often prejudged the tendency of opinions, which, on examination, they have adopted from a conviction of their truth; they have often been obliged to admire what they had previous condemned, and to condemn the subject of their former admiration.

It is, perhaps, one of the greatest advantages to be derived from history, that it gives us an opportunity of observing the force of the associations above alluded to, in the violent contentions that have, at different periods, agitated the world, concerning objects which to us appear futile and ridiculous. From the chang that has taken place in our associations, these objects are now stripped of their importance; and we wonder at their ever having been the occasion of hatred and bloodshed among those who were commanded "to love as brethren." But do we never suffer ourselves to be influenced by the same spirit, and to hate, with the same vivacity, those who differ from us in points, which, in a few years, will likewise be consigned to oblivion, or only found in the pages of the historian?

If from these considerations, added to the thousand other instances your own reflections must

suggest, it appears that deeprooted prejudice is inimical to our mental and moral faculties, it only remains to show, whether by preserving the infant mind from contracting the habits that lead to its formation, we may not in some degree prevent the effects we deprecate.

"*I hate demotats!*" says a little boy, whose organs of speech cannot yet be formed to the word; and "*I abhor aristocats*," says another urchin, with equal symptoms of zeal and aversion. Perhaps the parents of the first think they are thus imprinting the principles of loyalty in the breast of their son; while those of the latter, with an equal degree of judgment, imagine they are sowing the seed of patriotism in theirs. They are equally deceived. All the idea that either of them can give to the infant mind, is *that something is to be hated;* that there are descriptions of their fellow-creatures whom it is their duty to abhor. They learn to hate, or to say they hate, they know not what; and this facility of hatred, while it assists the growth of pride and indolence, is a fatal blight in the opening bud of virtue.

Those who agree with me in the propriety of making the morals taught by Jesus Christ, and his Apostles, their guide and standard, will surely not hesitate to pronounce the cultivation of the feelings of hatred to be incompatible with duty.

But it is not enough that we refrain from inculcating the principles of hatred; we must carefully preserve them from those associations which lead to it. On this account, we ought to watch over our own expressions of disapprobation and contempt. All national reflections and general censures, ought to be avoided before children; and indeed I believe it often happens, that these are most severe, when,

if we would examine our minds, we should find that the indignation which excites them has its foundation in some early prejudice, which has been implicitly adopted, and is on that very account the more obstinately adhered to. Whether we acknowledge this to be the case or no, I believe it would be well for our children, if in their presence we observed the example of the archangel, who, as St. Jude informs us, when contending with Satan himself, "brought not a railing accusation against him."

A little girl, who for the first time of her life was present at a political dispute, gave, in my opinion, an admirable reproof to one of the angry declaimers, who had poured forth a torrent of abuse against the leaders of an opposite faction, which he concluded by declaring with much vehemence, that he hated them all. 'O fye, sir!' said the infant, looking earnestly up in his face, 'we should hate nothing but sin, you know.' "And what is sin, my dear?" said the political champion, a little out of countenance by her remark. 'It is not doing as we are bid,' replied the child with great simplicity.

Disobedience is indeed, the only idea of moral turpitude of which a child is capable. The intellectual faculties must be long exercised on sensible objects, and circumstances familiar to common observation, and level to the understanding and capacity, before they become capable of abstraction; which they must arrive at, before the mind can compare and combine, so as to form precise notions of the tendency of opinions. Often, alas! is this faculty unattained through life. Where the understanding is never exercised, it becomes quiescent, and suffers the suggestions of passion and prejudice

to be imposed on it for truth. Would we have our children superior to this, let us, in the exercise of their intellectual faculties, not oppose, but follow, the order of nature. Let their reasoning powers be in infancy confined to objects of sense. Let their curiosity be roused, and their attention engaged to observation on the scene around them. Make even the toys and amusements of infancy subservient to the culture of their understanding; but let the passions, the follies, and the prejudices, of advanced years be strangers to their bosoms.

Next to the feelings of hatred and antipathy, we may mention those of contempt; feelings which are caught from sympathy, long before they are generated by the pride and vanity of the human heart. A habit of speaking contemptuously of others, argues much self-complacency, operating upon a weak and unfurnished mind. Upon a hearer of an opposite character it never operates to the disadvantage of the person spoken of, but leaves an impression of the envy and malevolence of the speaker. On the minds of children, however, its effects are more pernicious. They cannot learn to speak with contempt, even of the lowest individual, without acquiring some degree of that self-complacency which is the mother of pride. When they discover their own superiority to a companion, pains should be taken to point out to them somewhat in which that companion excels them; not to excite envy but to quell the first feelings of pride. They ought, on no account, to be permitted to make personal defects the subject of ridicule; nor should the ignorance even of a servant be mentioned before them in such a way as to excite contempt.

There does not, perhaps, occur, on the whole subject of education, a point of greater difficulty

than this with regard to servants. It is forcibly pointed out by Locke, who, after mentioning the pernicious consequences resulting from their communication with children, candidly acknowledges, that "it is a hard matter wholly to prevent this mischief." Miss Edgeworth cuts the knot at once; an absolute unqualified prohibition of all intercourse between the children of the family and domestics of every denomination is by her recommended, and enforced by examples of some weight, and arguments of much ingenuity.

To differ from such authorities as Locke and Edgeworth, may appear presumptuous; but authorities, however respectable, ought not to fetter the mind, so as to prevent the freedom of investigation. Physicians may agree in the nature of a patient's disease, and in their opinion of his danger; but if a very violent remedy be proposed, a conscientious practitioner will consider, whether it may not produce effects as fatal to the constitution of the patient, as the disease it is intended to cure. In this light appears to me the mandate of prohibition above alluded to.

Were knowledge, indeed, the one thing needful, and did the cultivation of the heart form but a secondary part of our plan of education, we might, without scruple, prepossess the minds of our pupils against the vulgar and the ignorant. But as knowledge is only valuable, in proportion as it has a tendency to promote social and individual happiness, by giving new motives to virtue, and thus extending the influence of the benevolent affections, and counteracting or extirpating the malevolent; it follows, that whatever produces a tendency to the malevolent passions, defeats the noblest purposes for which knowledge has ever been acquired.

Wherever the selfish passions predominate, the social and benevolent affections must be proportionally decreased. Pride, as a selfish passion, is particularly inimical to the influence of benevolence; while humility, by depreciating the value of our own superior attainments, and striking off the exaggerations of self-love, permits us to dwell upon the excellencies of others, and is therefore productive of the benevolent affections.

Whatever tends to inspire children with an high opinion of their own comparative importance; whatever annexes to the idea of situation, independent of worth or virtue, ideas of contempt or complacency; will certainly counteract our design of inspiring them with humility. The light in which children are generally taught to consider servants, must infallibly, at a very early age, produce this high opinion of their own comparative importance; an importance which they must attach to situation, and which must therefore necessarily be productive of the pride of rank and power—a pride which we would vainly endeavour to reconcile with true Christian humility. Would we make a proper use of the instruments which nature so kindly affords us, in the helplessness of infancy we should find a powerful assistant in laying the foundation of this inestimable virtue. Why should we not teach them to accept of the services their tender age requires, with meekness and gratitude! Might not this first exercise of the social and benevolent affections produce effects upon the mind so advantageous to the character, as completely to counterbalance all the evils which can arise from occasional intercourse with domestics? But are these evils certain and unavoidable? Is it impossible to procure attendants for our children, of uncorrupted minds and undepraved

manners? I cannot believe it. The corruption and depravity of servants is a general theme. From whence does it proceed, but from the corruption and depravity of their superiors. Governed by the selfishness of luxury and pride, we concern ourselves no further with the morals of our domestics than is necessary to the preservation of our property. No qualities are regarded in them, but such as contribute to the gratification of our ease or convenience. Their virtues are unrewarded by our esteem; their vices, provided they do not immediately injure us, unpunished by our disapprobation.

Whatever may be our own opinions concerning religion, we all agree that a notion of a Deity, and a fear of future punishment, is necessary to the vulgar; and yet who, in this age of philosophy and refinement, makes the religious instruction of their servants any part of their concern? Pride prevents us from undertaking what policy would dictate. We feel it too mortifying to represent to beings so much beneath us, that we are the creatures of the same God; that we are to be judged by the same laws; and that in a few fleeting years no other distinction shall be found between us except that of virtue! The moral precepts of our religion it may not indeed be convenient to dwell upon, as we must blush to recommend rules to their practice, which seldom govern our own. The golden precept of *doing as we would be done by* may, perhaps, sometimes occur to us in our transactions with our equals, but it seems as if we had some clause of exception with regard to our behaviour to those of an inferior station. We consider not them as beings endowed with passions and feelings similar to our own. Wrapt up in our prerogative, we provoke the one

with impunity, and insult the other without remorse. If we cannot read a chapter of the New Testament in their presence which does not libel our conduct, it is no wonder that we decline the task of religious instruction. But why, after this, declaim against the ignorance and depravity of servants? Those who have had sufficient energy to obey the call of principle in their domestic regulations; those who have considered the moral qualities of their servants as no less important than their abilities, and who to instruction and precept have added the weight of example; have generally found that worth is to be met with in every station. People of moderate fortune have indeed here, as in many other respects, a manifest advantage. The size of their establishments does not swell beyond the possibility of inspection. The conduct and character of every individual of their families is, or ought to be, known to them. But, alas! the indolence of luxury is no longer confined within the walls of palaces! It pervades all ranks in society. What more common, than to hear ladies, even of moderate fortune, declare they have not a servant on whose truth or honesty they can depend; but that they do not change, because they know it impossible to get better? Were I to speak from experience, I should question this impossibility; for in the course of my life it has been my fate, both in town and country, in the corruption of the metropolis and the secluded scenes of retirement, to meet with servants, the excellence of whose moral characters entitled them to my esteem. The attendant of my infancy still possesses the regard, the gratitude, and veneration of my heart. She is now advanced into the vale of years, and I firmly be-

lieve will go to the great audit with a conscience that has never been stained by deceit, equivocation, or falsehood; nor is it improbable, that I may, perhaps, be more indebted for my love of truth to her example, than to all the precepts of my instructers. And yet she was but the orphan daughter of a poor servant! It must be, however, confessed, that the principles of religion were early and deeply implanted in her mind.

I do not fear your pardoning the egotism of this digression, as it is illustrative of my argument, which is intended to prove the possibility of procuring domestics from whose morals we have nothing to apprehend. The erroneous opinions and prejudices arising from their want of cultivation ought certainly to be guarded against; but if children are to be saved from them at the expense of their humility, I confess I should think it too dear a purchase.

You will not, I hope, so far mistake me, as to imagine I recommend the company of servants. I am too well aware of all the inconveniences and dangers resulting from associating with uninformed minds, not to wish your children may be preserved from the society of *the vulgar of all ranks*. The more they can be with yourself, and the less they are with others, the better. But were such an absolute seclusion from all intercourse with domestics, as has been recommended by Miss Edgeworth, practicable, which I believe to be the case in few families, I think it would be dangerous to enforce it by precept. To make a child enter into your reasons for the prohibition appears to me impossible; and to suffer them to consider servants in the light of noxious animals, whom they must carefully shun, I should apprehend to be injurious.

Mothers who find it impossible to adopt Miss Edgeworth's plan in its full extent, sometimes endeavour to counteract the bad effects they apprehend to result from the intercourse with servants, by prejudicing the minds of their children against them. But does this answer the end proposed? Soon, indeed, may children learn to regard servants in the light of inferior beings, whom, *for that reason*, they ought to despise. Soon may they acquire the habit of commanding them in the tone of authority, of speaking to them with arrogance, and observing and reporting their conversation and conduct with all the eloquence of invective. Does it thence follow, that they will be the less liable to imbibe the prejudices, or to imitate the manners, of these degraded and despised companions? Experience, I think shows the contrary. Better, far better, to adopt the plan of complete and absolute separation, than to permit children to associate with beings they are taught at once to tyrannize over and contemn.

Let us now examine how the treatment we ourselves give to servants, may obviate the bad consequences of that communication betwixt them and our children, which, in many families, must of necessity take place.

Cunning is one of the vices of the servile state, which we should beware of encouraging. From the moment a servant perceives us open to flattery, this vice is in a perpetual state of requisition. By these means the favourite nursery-maid frequently governs the whole family. It is not by a scrutinous examination of the strictness with which she performs her duty, that we learn to appreciate her worth; it is by her hyperbolical expressions of affection for the *dear infants*, by her flattering encomiums on their extraordinary beauty and wonder-

ful sagacity, and by her still more flattering comparisons between them and the less extraordinary children of our neighbours, that we are convinced of her value. What admirable initiatory lessons of vanity and self-conceit for the poor children who are present at these conversations between mother and maid! Would we avoid all this, we should never permit servants to address us, nor even speak to them, but on their immediate business. We should enforce a strict obedience to our commands, which should be issued with mildness but with authority. We should admit of no disobedience to our rules, on pretence of tenderness for the children; and by showing we look on it as mere pretence, we shall soon put a stop to these breaches of discipline. Nor should we ever withhold the just reward of approbation for a strict compliance with our injunctions. By these means children will learn the value of obedience; it will become more strongly associated with the pleasing ideas of applause and approbation; and by seeing that we *esteem worth in every situation*, they will learn to consider it as having an intrinsic value.

When we permit ourselves to converse familiarly with servants on affairs remote from their business, and allow of their giving their opinion on our method of management, we teach children to apply to them as oracles of information on every subject. We inspire a taste for listening to their tattle, and must submit to the consequences. By showing them on the contrary, that we consider servants as useful assistants in the business of our family, but not in the light of companions or advisers; that their merit consists not in an assiduous compliance with our humours and caprices, but in a strict and uniform discharge of the duties of their station, we

prevent much of their influence on the minds of children. By example, as well as precept, we should teach children to accept of their services, where they are called for, with thankfulness; never to speak to them in the haughty tone of arrogant authority; never wantonly to exercise their patience, by keeping them waiting for our pleasure; and never to make their personal defects, or even that ignorance which is less their fault than their misfortune, the subject of ridicule. By our care of their health, and attention to them in sickness, in which the children should, if the disease be not infectious, learn to assist us, they will be taught the duties of humanity: by the care they see us bestow on their religious instruction, they will receive lessons of its importance; and by our utter reprobation of every instance of falsehood or equivocation, which should be followed by immediate dismission from our service, they will attach to a departure from truth ideas of irremediable disgrace.

Thus may the treatment we give our servants, be made an instrument of instruction; at the same time that children, without being taught to avoid them as infectious, may be made to find so much greater inducements to our society as to be in no danger of preferring theirs. To effect this, we should never fail to give the nursery-maid such full employment at her needle, as will leave her little time to join either in their sports or in their conversation. The sooner they learn to take care of themselves the better. It is sufficient, that all instruments of mischief, and all that is too precious, or too brittle for their handling, should be removed, and then let them invent work and

amusement for themselves. I could say much more on this subject, but here all my ideas have been anticipated, and so ably and elegantly expressed, by the sensible author of *Practical Education*, that it would be presumption in me to attempt further elucidation. (D.)

Adieu.

LETTER V.

AGREEABLE ASSOCIATIONS.

Introductory remarks upon the subject of religion.—Danger of affixing gloomy associations with the performance of religious duty.—Advantages resulting from impressions of an opposite tendency.—Illustrations.

HAVING taken a view, a slight and imperfect view we must acknowledge, of those early and powerful associations which are derived from strong and vivid impressions, we come next to consider those that are gradually fixed in the mind by frequent repetition.

To this second class we have referred all associations of the pleasurable kind. Of those, I well know the friend to whom I address myself, will agree with me in thinking that devotional sentiment ought to take the lead; and were these Letters intended for your exclusive perusal, I should proceed without hesitation or apology. But at a time when infidelity and enthusiasm so much abound; when all who are not *infidels* are denominated *enthusiasts* by one party, and all who are not *enthusiasts* are classed with *infidels* by the other; it may be ne-

cessary to assure the reader, that I am remote from either.

I have no wish to make converts to any particular creed ; but I have an earnest, a zealous wish, that all who are fully convinced of the truth of the Gospel, would unite in brotherly love and pure affection ; being fully persuaded, that were the true spirit of Christian charity to become, as it ought, the distinguishing characteristic of the Christian church, the shafts of infidelity would fall harmless to the ground. Variety of opinion is the inevitable consequence of that variety of intellect which God has been pleased to bestow on mankind. In the infinite variety that appears in the human countenance, every pious person acknowledges the wonder-working hand of the great Creator ; and is it not the same hand who has mixed and modified the mental powers to the production of a variety as infinite ? This arrogant desire of uniformity in sentiment and opinion, seems early to have made its way into the Christian church ; and may easily be accounted for in the Jewish converts, from habit and association. It is, however, no where countenanced in the apostolical writings, but is often and effectually combated by the conclusive reasonings of St. Paul, and by the more simple eloquence of the other apostles. Far be it then from me presumptuously to impose my particular creed as the only passport to the favour of the Eternal. Religion I consider as essential to the happiness of mankind ; not only to future but to present happiness. And when I speak of religion, I do certainly mean the Christian religion ; not however confining the term exclusively to the church of which I am a member, but extending it to all who have " built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,

Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord."

Nor from this declaration let any one consider me as a latitudinarian in principle. Those passages of doubtful import which have chiefly engaged the attention of theologians, and on which the divisions of sects have been founded, appear not to me to constitute the essential doctrines of Christianity. These, we are expressly told in scripture, are so plain, "that he that runneth may read them." I consider that what is above my apprehension, I cannot be commanded to understand; but depending on Divine authority, I believe that what I understand not now, shall, when this fleshly veil is removed, be made clear to me hereafter. As far as I have been able to observe, I have seldom seen the spirit of *theological controversy*, and of *christian charity* united; and hope I shall not be condemned for preferring the latter.

The increase of infidelity has been so seriously lamented, and seems so universally acknowledged, by those who ought to be better able to judge than I can presume to imagine myself, that I feel great diffidence in dissenting from an opinion which seems so well established. But as in ancient Rome it was regarded as the mark of a good citizen, never to despair of the fortunes of the Republic, so is it the duty of a good Christian never to despair of the final triumph of the gospel. Let not then my presumption be deemed unpardonable, when I recommend it to those who have taken this pious alarm, to consider whether it be not rather the number of *writers* upon infidelity, than of infidels, that has of late increased. How few who now write upon the subject, have the smallest claim

to originality ! To two or three sources all their arguments may be traced ; and these arguments, after having been repeatedly refuted, are again presented in a new form, and imposed as novelties on the unthinking. As novelties, they gain the applause of an hour, and then sink into oblivion ; while the truths of Christianity " shine more and more unto the perfect day." Of all who embrace the cause of infidelity, how few are members lost to the Christian church ! In private life we consider those who take the name of *friends*, while their actions discover indifference or enmity, as more dangerous than open foes. So it is with religion ; whose sacred cause has suffered more from bigotry and superstition, than it is ever likely to do from the most violent attacks of infidelity. That these attacks will soon be divested of all power to do mischief, we may reasonably hope, when we consider that scepticism can no longer be looked on as a proof of superior wisdom or sagacity.

When the fetters of superstition universally bound the human mind ; when the dominion of prejudice was established in every heart, and all with implicit submission yielded to her authority ; then, indeed, to dare to doubt was to betray an extraordinary degree of courage and resolution. To dare to investigate, required a still superior magnanimity. In the rage for investigation, however, we may perhaps find, that inquirers were not always at the pains to separate the tares from the wheat. The errors which their sagacity discovered, were often mixed with the most important truths, without which alliance they could not so long have held their usurped dominion over the human mind. But of these the philosophers took no account : still influenced by the bigotry of preju-

dice, they condemned, as they had believed, *in toto*. Their followers have walked in their footsteps; and as it is much easier to *doubt* than to investigate; to sneer at the prejudices of others than to emancipate our minds from the dominion of our own, in most of the freethinkers we meet with, we may observe that they have made but an exchange of prejudices, and are in reality slaves—while they call themselves free. (E.)

Let it be our endeavour so to watch over the early association of our pupils, that in their riper years they may not be under the temptation of rejecting truth, on account of the errors with which we have entangled it; nor of implicitly receiving error, from its being found mixed with truth.

In order to render the mind superior to prejudice, it has been proposed by some philosophers, to omit every species of religious instruction, till the powers of the understanding are sufficiently ripe for comprehending all its mysteries. Religion is then to be learned as a science, a mere matter of speculation; it is to be propounded to the unbiassed judgment as an object of curiosity, almost as worthy of investigation as the laws of electricity or magnetism. But will the pupil come to the investigation with a mind equally well prepared? Has not the preceptor, through the whole course of his pupil's education, been labouring to implant the love of science in his mind? Has he not endeavoured to excite a desire for knowledge, by the stimulus of reward and punishment, praise and disapprobation, and to associate it with the ideas of honour and esteem? If this unceasing attention, this unremitted assiduity, be necessary to direct the intellectual faculties to the pursuit of learning and science, is it to be supposed that religious sentiment, unconnect-

ed with all early association, unaided by any previous disposition, can all at once find admission to the mind ?

Did we, indeed, consider the New Testament as as a "mere statute-book," as a "table where every offence is detailed, and its corresponding penalty annexed," we might safely defer the consideration of its doctrines till the period proposed ; and then recommend it to our pupil's perusal, as we would do Blackstone's Commentaries or any other judicious treatise upon moral and civil jurisprudence. But as has been observed by an eloquent and able contemporary,* "the New Testament is not so much a compilation as a spirit of laws ; it does not so much prohibit every individual wrong practice, as suggest a temper and implant a general principle with which every wrong practice is incompatible."

Before we reject religious instruction, we should do well to consider, whether the happiness of our pupils is more likely to be injured or promoted by imbibing a portion of the spirit which pervades the tenor of the gospel ; a spirit which teaches love to God, and good-will towards men.

The propriety of cultivating feelings of benevolence towards our fellow-creatures, is seldom denied in theory, however frequently the duty may be omitted in practice. It has been recommended by the eloquence of heathen philosophers, and enforced by some extraordinary examples of heathen philanthrophy ; but as the foundations on which they built their beautiful theories of virtue were narrow and confined, the superstructure was frail and perishable ; and never was the true foundation discovered, till

* Mrs. Hannah Moore's Strictures on Education, vol. ii. p. 199.

brought to light by Jesus Christ. He first taught how the obstacles to benevolence were to be removed by conquering that pride, self-love, and vain glory, which had till then constituted a part of the catalogue of human virtues. He first taught the universality of its extent, by connecting it with the love of the common Father and Benefactor of all, and made the love of our fellow-creatures the test and criterion of our love to the Creator; while from true devotion to the Supreme Being he taught that benevolence to man must necessarily flow. He likewise taught, that upon all who were convinced of these truths, and were anxious to fulfil the divine commandments, divine assistance would be bestowed. He alone ennobled virtue, by the assurance of an eternal reward; and gave dignity to this probationary scene, by representing it as introductory to a glorious and ever-during state of felicity.

Is there ought in these doctrines that can tend to render the mind gloomy and unsocial? Will the habitual gratitude of the heart to the Supreme Benefactor detract from the enjoyment of his gifts? Will the idea of the constant presence and protection, the love and favour, of such a Being tend to depress the mind? Or will the wish for the approbation of this heavenly Father, Friend, Protector, and Judge, and the fear of his displeasure, impair the energy of virtue? Why, then, do we reject the salutary assistance which religion offers us, for subduing the worst, and cultivating the best passions and affections of the human heart? Alas! because, that by the public and the splendid scenes of this vain and transitory life we are so completely engrossed, that in the education of our children we lose every other view but that of qualifying them to attract the applause and admiration of the world.

For this in our boys we cultivate the understanding while we neglect the heart. In our girls we leave both heart and understanding to the care of chance; while we assiduously endeavour to make them excel in a few superficial and useless accomplishments. But while we thus strive to build the fabric of their fame, it is to be feared that in laying the foundation we sometimes undermine their happiness:

> "One self approving hour whole years outweighs
> Of stupid starers, and of loud huzzas."

The applause and admiration of the world, for which we so anxiously prepare them, it may never be their lot to receive. Fortune may remove her pedestal, on which, if the candidate for admiration does not stand, in vain will he hope for success; or envy may stifle the voice of approbation, or superior address and impudence may gain the prize. From a thousand sources disappointment may flow; bringing to minds perverted by false ambition, all the anguish of chagrin, envy and malevolence.

The sympathy which makes the applause of our fellow-creatures so grateful to the heart; the sensibility which makes us so keenly feel the wounds of neglect, ridicule or disapprobation; may be made instruments to form the character either to vice or virtue, according to the direction they receive from early association. Where the love of God has been early implanted in the heart; where the mind has been taught to approve itself by its idea of the approbation of a Being infinite in all perfection, immutable as powerful, benevolent as wise; its sympathy will become discriminating, and it will only be gratified by the applause which in some measure accords with that of the Supreme. Sensibility will

then serve to heighten the delight of that sweet consciousness which arises from a sense of the performance of duty; and this delight will be augmented, not by the vain applause of the multitude, but by the concurring approbation of the good and wise. A young man who has imbibed these principles, will, on entering into life, escape much of the danger to which young men are generally exposed from the desire of obtaining the applause of those with whom it may be their fate to associate. He will distinguish between the agreeable and the worthy, the solid and the superficial, the real and the seeming; he will neither be dazzled by the splendour of talents, nor misled by the sophistry of argument. He will, on all occasions, have an unerring standard to refer to; and should he, by the strength of temptation, or the force of example, be led to make a momentary aberration into the paths of vice, his excursion will be short, his return certain.

It may, perhaps, be said, that experience does not justify us in making this assertion. That, on the contrary, we every day see instances of those who, after having received the most religious education, and been most strictly brought up in the fear of God, have no sooner been released from paternal restraint, than they have entered on the career of vice, and become the most zealous champions of infidelity.

A point so momentous is worthy of our attention; and calls for our minute and anxious investigation. Let us first examine, how notions of the Deity, and religious sentiment, the consequence of these notions, are commonly instilled by pious parents; and see if we cannot discover some cause for that dereliction of religious principle here complained of.

We have already observed the effects of strong and painful sensation in producing associations of terror and aversion. These effects are often too little attended to in the religious education of the nursery. By pious but ill-judging parents, the idea of the Deity is introduced to the imagination of infants, accompanied by exactly similar impressions to those which were conjured up by the name of raw-head and bloody-bones. Their kind and heavenly Father is made to appear to them in the light of an invisible but avenging tyrant, whose service is perfect bondage. That hatred of sin which springs from the perfection of the moral attributes of the Deity, is prematurely presented to their minds at a period when they are yet incapable of perceiving abstract truth. The impression that is by these means made upon their senses, is, however, sufficiently strong to remain permanent; but whether the associations thus produced will be those of pleasure or aversion, I leave it for you to judge. Would good people permit their zeal to be under the dominion of their judgment; would they pay some attention to the progress of mind, and observe the slow and gradual process of nature in the developement of the faculties, they would not idly attempt to explain to children subjects of abstract speculation, at a period when at best it can have no other effect, than to leave upon their minds impressions of weariness and wonder.

What wild and incoherent notions children sometimes form from these futile and ill-directed attempts to imbue them with religious principle, we must all have had occasion to observe. I shall give a few instances sufficiently illustrative of my argument.

A fine boy of four years old, son to a worthy clergyman, who,

> "Far in a wild remote from public view,
> From youth to age in his own parish grew,"

and who had received from this pious father the most awful but incomprehensible notions of the Divinity, happened to be detected one evening in telling a falsehood. After a long and serious lecture on the enormity of the sin, which the little culprit was told had made him liable to the wrath of Heaven, he was sent into a dark room to beg pardon of God, for having thus offended him. The night was dark and stormy. A succession of black clouds chased each other along the heavens, and obscured, except at intervals, the face of the moon. The appearance of the sky had caught the boy's attention; his mind had been previously worked up to a degree of awe and enthusiasm, which is at all times of life particularly favourable for contemplating the grand phenomena of nature. He remained for a considerable time in his place of penance, and at length returned to the parlour with a smiling countenance. "You must forgive me now, papa," cried he, "for God has forgiven me."

'What do you mean, child?' said the astonished father. 'How are you sure that God has been reconciled to you?'

"O I am *quite* sure," returned the boy, "*for he smiled at me through the clouds!*"

Mrs. Piozzi has related an anecdote, which shocks while it instructs us; and my recollection furnishes me with one somewhat similar, of a little girl, who, after a very tiresome and incomprehensible harangue on the divinity of our Saviour, stopped her preceptress by asking, whether he was really God? Being answered in the affirmative:

"O how I should have liked to have been in heaven, when he was down here then," replied the child, "for then, you know, all the angels would get a holiday, and they would be *so merry !*" The same child, to whom Sunday had been made a day of gloomy restraint and incessant application, was so shocked by a long sermon, in which the pious preacher expatiated on the nature of a future state, under the figure of an *eternal Sabbath*, that it required no small pains of an able and judicious parent to counteract this unfortunate association.

When notions of God and of religion are associated with ideas of a painful and a gloomy cast, can we wonder, if the mind should seize the first opportunity of emancipating itself from their cruel bondage ? This opportunity can, to young men at least, be never wanting. With avidity will they listen to the sophistry of scepticism, who have been taught to tremble while they believed. Those who have found belief to be slavery, will consider infidelity as freedom. They may, however, find it an easier matter to triumph over their faith than their prejudices ; and while they exonerate themselves from all obligation to religious duty, it is not impossible that they may still retain the slavish spirit of fear and superstition.*

Such converts to infidelity nothing less than a miracle can reclaim. The gloomy and unpleasant ideas they have associated with religion, strengthen their resistance to the admission of truth ; and render them incapable of examining with impartiality the weight of the arguments on either side, their prejudices being all won over to that of scepticism.

* The life and death of Voltaire furnishes an apposite illustration of the truth of what is here asserted.

When a man has in these circumstances, *made up his mind*, all arguments intended to convince him of his mistake only serve to confirm him in his chosen way of thinking. One who has been altogether uninstructed in the principles of religion, has here a manifest advantage; as it has been well observed by a celebrated philosopher,* that "an argument or evidence of any kind that is entirely *new* to a man, may make a proper impression upon him; but if it has been often proposed to him, and he has had time to view and consider it, *so as to have hit upon any method of evading the force of it*, he is afterwards quite callous to it, and can very seldom be prevailed upon to give it any proper attention."

Let us now consider the consequence of this dereliction of religious principle.

The associations of happiness and virtue, of vice and misery, which are fixed and confirmed by religious principle, can scarcely fail to be weakened by its loss. If the idea of happiness be connected with self-gratification, and the idea of misery attached to the disappointment of self-will, present interest and present pleasure will be pursued as happiness; and where the passions are ardent, the animal spirits strong, and the habits of virtue feeble and unsettled, the man who has cast aside the higher motives offered by religion, while he floats without anchor or compass on the sea of temptation, has little chance of escaping the vortex of vice.

Instances, indeed, there are of the associations fixed by religious principle in early life remaining permanent after the principle that gave them birth, has been denied or forgotten. Where the passions are moderate, and the temper amiable and serene,

* Dr. Priestley.

a man of good understanding, who has contracted early habits of sobriety and decorum, may so well perform the relative duties of life, as to leave us nothing to regret, but that such a man should have deprived himself of that *hope which rejoiceth the heart*.

There are yet people of another cast of temper, to whom the loss of religious principle is a misfortune truly deplorable. Persons addicted to melancholy, whose low and timid spirits stand particularly in need of the consolation and support which Christianity so peculiarly affords.

Where gloomy associations have been early united with the first ideas of religion, such minds will gladly throw off its yoke. But what is the consequence? Can the whole world present a spectacle so worthy of commiseration, as that of a timid and dejected soul divested of all support from the invigorating hope of heavenly protection and eternal happiness? To such a mind the prospects of this life are veiled in eternal clouds, and no enlivening ray darts from another to cheer the gloom. Without a regard to God, as the maker and governor of all things, this world affords but an uncomfortable prospect: without a reliance on his superintending care, the anxiety concerning future events must, to a naturally desponding temper, be a source of incessant misery. In vain does fortune smile. In vain are his wishes fulfilled. In vain does happiness seem to solicit his acceptance. The gnawing worm of discontent preys upon his bosom, a morbid irratibility of temper adds its cruel stings; and if the loss of reason does not fill up the measure of his calamity, the want of energy which is consequent upon despondency, will in the ruin of his

worldly affairs, probable justify the most gloomy forebodings of despair.

How different would have been the situation of such a person as has been now described, had the first conceptions of the Deity and of revealed religion been associated with cheerful, exhilarating, and agreeable impressions? He would not then have so easily been led to relinquish principles which had been made to him a source of hope and consolation, for a blank and joyless scepticism. Had religious sentiment been blended with all that touches the heart and charms the imagination, the beauties of nature, and the still superior beauties of moral truth, it would not so readily have yielded to the attacks of the witty, or the arguments of the plausible; but have remained to solace and invigorate the mind in every event, and through every period of life.

Here fact comes in to the support of theory; and I can assert the observations I have presumed to make, to be amply justified by experience.

One gentleman it has been my happiness to know, who entered upon life at the age of sixteen, without guide but his own principle, without monitor but the precepts of education, and the dictates of his own heart. Unsullied by the temptations of a capital, he was plunged into the temptations of a camp. Fond of society, where his cheerful temper and easy manners formed him to shine, but still fonder of improvement, neither the inducements of camp or city interrupted his unwearied pursuits of literature and science. Surrounded by companions who had caught the contagion of scepticism, he, at this early period of life, listened to their arguments; weighed, examined, detected, their futility; and rejected them! In prosperity and adversity, in public

and in private life, the sentiments of religion retained their influence on his heart. Through life they were his guide, in death his consolation. When sinking by painful steps into an early grave, "with what gratitude," he exclaimed, "with what delightful gratitude do I now look back to the period of my infancy, and to the judicious conduct of my mother, who made religion appear to me in colours so engaging and so congenial! Had I been taught as other boys are taught, my passions would have made me an easy prey to vice; my love of inquiry would have led me to infidelity. She prepared me for the trial of faith and virtue, and, thanks to God, I have come off victorious. Had religion been made to me a gloomy task in infancy, where would now have been my consolation?"

I find this subject is still too much for me.

Adieu.

LETTER VI.

Same Subject continued.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

If the establishment of religious principle in the minds of our pupils, on a firm and lasting foundation, appear to us an object of importance, we shall not be satisfied with a slight and hasty survey of the means of accomplishing it. I shall therefore, make no apology for resuming a subject which, in the light I view it, as the only never-failing source of joy and consolation, is worthy of the highest degree of attention.

The graces and virtues which adorn the Christian character are of such intrinsic value, as to attract the esteem and veneration of the confirmed infidel. Why is the fruit admired, while the tree that bringeth it forth is held in contempt? Why is the true source denied or despised, while the stream that flows from it is held in universal estimation? Is it not because the tree is not examined, nor the source analyzed? Because fruit which springs not from that tree, bears its name; and waters of bitterness pretend to have derived their origin from the fountain of sweets?

The duties of religion are considered as separate and distinct from the common concerns of life; and those who pique themselves on the strictest performance of them, are not always most amiable and engaging. What Mrs. More so well observes of the learning of ladies, may justly be applied to the religion of devotees. "It stands out, as it were, above the very surface of their minds, like the *appliquee* of the embroiderer; instead of having been interwoven with the growth of the piece, so as to have become a part of the stuff." There is a pedantry in religion as well as in knowledge, into which minds that are thoroughly enlightened will not be apt to fall. The affected use of technical terms upon scientific subjects is generally considered as savouring more of vanity than knowledge; yet some worthy people make it a matter of conscience to interlard their conversation with a sort of technical piety, which, by exciting disgust or ridicule in the young and unthinking, is productive of the worst effects. The human mind is so constituted, as very unwillingly to admit the assumed superiority, which pretensions to uncommon sanctity imply. A grateful sense of the Divine Goodness, cheerful

submission to the Divine Will, diffusive charity, and extensive benevolence, touch the chords of sympathy in every generous breast; but by the austerity of a devotee, no such sympathy was ever yet awakened.

At a time of life when the world appears to wear a smiling and inviting aspect, if religion be drest in frowns, she will gain few willing votaries. In our endeavours to impress religious principle upon the tender mind, we must have it still in our recollection that the laws of nature can never be violated with impunity. Let us remember, that youth is the season of cheerfulness; that the infancy of all animals is frolicsome and gay; that whatever is gloomy is then disgusting; and that when the animal spirits are in full play, the mind may not be capable of discriminating between the serious and the gloomy. Could long and serious lectures be given to children in favour of falsehoods, vanity, and sensual indulgence, I believe few more effectual methods could be taken to cure them of those propensities. But while the whole tenor of agreeable associations lays the foundation of these vices, we reserve the disgust of serious lectures for religion and virtue!

"It is observable," says Hartley, "that the mere transit of words, expressing strong ideas, over the ears of children affects them." On this principle the idea of an unseen Benefactor, who is the Giver of every good, the Author of all the felicity of which the infant heart is sensible, may easily be conveyed to the mind at a very early period. By a little pains, the most pleasing associations may be formed with the idea of this unseen Benefactor. Let the moment be seized, when the little heart dilates with joy at some unexpected pleasure, to

form its first attempt at prayer. "I thank thee O God, for making my mamma, or other friends, so good to me," may be quite sufficient; and if suggested upon proper occasions, and repeated not as a formal duty but a spontaneous effusion of the heart, it will not fail to produce an effect upon the affections. As the sphere of observation is enlarged, and the sources of pleasure multiply upon the mind, every object of nature that inspires admiration, every social endearment which produces delight, may be made instruments to conduct the infant heart to God. Let me not be laughed at for the confession, and I shall freely acknowledge to you that I at this moment look back with infinite pleasure to the delightful period, when, with the simplicity of infant innocence, I poured out my little soul in grateful thanks to the Almighty for the happiness enjoyed at a dancing school ball! Nor am I certain, that all the catechisms and all the hymns with which my poor memory was loaded, produced half the benefit to my mind as that which flowed from this powerful association of felicity with its Divine source.

I confess it is much easier, and perhaps more gratifying to our vanity as well as to our indolence, to make children get long prayers and catechisms by heart, than thus by gentle and imperceptible degrees to impress them with feelings of gratitude and affection for their Heavenly Father. But whoever would succeed in the great work of education, must begin by conquering vanity and indolence in themselves, for these are the great, the perpetually occurring obstacles to success.

I believe the recollection of most people who have been educated by pious parents, will furnish them with numerous instances of the inutility of

loading the memory at an early period with creeds and catechisms which are totally beyond the comprehension. Even those which are best adapted to the capacity of childhood lose all their meaning, when detached into the small and broken portions, by the repetition of which they are committed to memory. Often, in these repetitions of detached sentences, are erroneous, nay, sometimes ridiculous associations formed, which it may afterwards be a difficult matter to shake off. The following passage in one of my catechisms appears sufficiently plain and intelligible:—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments *hang* all the law and the prophets." In committing this to memory, I divided the latter sentence, as I had done the former one, into separate portions; and, by frequent repetition, so powerfully impressed my fancy with the image of the law and the prophets hung upon pegs, that it was no easy matter to get the better of the association. My recollection, I candidly confess, does not furnish me with a single instance of improvement from any of the didactic compositions I was obliged to get by heart; and yet these were all as judiciously chosen as possible. Often did my dear and amiable instructress listen with mingled solicitude and delight, to my senseless though accurate recitation of passages, which excited in her mind a train of ideas very different from those they raised in mine. Had she stopped here; had she contented herself, as many do, with this one method of religious instruction; it is probable that the importance of religious principle would now have appeared to me in a very inferior light.

I have, perhaps, already advanced enough upon this head to expose myself to the censure of many serious and well-disposed persons, whose respect for whatever has been sanctioned by the practice of the good and pious, will not permit them to examine into the propriety, or to doubt the efficacy, of a mode of instruction stamped with such respectable authority. Let it be remembered, however, that I presume not to dictate, or to impose my own feelings and experience as a criterion, in opposition to the feelings and experience of others. Where I dissent, I wish it to be understood that I do so with becoming diffidence; and that I rather urge the attentive consideration of my arguments, than the implicit adoption of my plans.

To me it appears, that whoever wishes religious principle to influence the heart, and govern the conduct in future life, must early influence the heart and the affections in its favour. This, from all that we know of the human mind, can only be affected by means of agreeable associations; and seldom, I fear, are these attached to a catechism. Still if principle were really to be instilled by means of these dry and didactic compositions, it would be proper in this as in other instances to sacrifice the agreeable to the useful, and to force perseverance in spite of aversion. But how can an infant acquire principle by means of sounds to which he can attach no sense? Let us examine the compositions we impose upon him as the rudiments of faith. Shall we not often find them to be the conclusions of elaborate metaphysical speculation, deduced from a chain of arguments which we ourselves can with difficulty trace? And is it, before the mind is able to compare and to combine, before the powers of reflection have begun to operate, and while the ideas

received by means of the senses are yet few and confused, that we can expect an infant to comprehend them? If a father intend that his son should be a mathematician, he will not begin at four or five years old to make him get by heart the problems of Euclid; but following nature in the gradual developement of the faculties, he will begin by the simplest propositions of arithmetic; and not vainly expect that by a jingle of words he is to teach his child the nature of a cycloid or a parabola, before he has been taught by his senses that two and two make four.

How easily the eagerness of infantine curiosity may be rendered instrumental to the acquisition of knowledge, has been admirably illustrated by the authors of "Practical Education;" but may it not still be turned to a nobler purpose? May it not be directed to a First Cause, powerful, wise, and good; and through the works of Nature be made to lead to Nature's God? As the understanding opens to moral truth, the moral attributes of the Deity will occasionally be suggested, and will be the more readily admitted and the more deeply reverenced, from the previous agreeable associations of goodness and power. The truths of natural religion will then pave the way for the truths of revelation. Between these, enthusiasts and infidels, with equal zeal, have laboured to make a divorce; but they have laboured in vain; and every unprejudiced mind must perceive, with infinite satisfaction, that they mutually illustrate and support each other. *Revealed religion* is, indeed, the perfection of *natural religion;* and has the advantage of placing its truths on a foundation to which the conjectures of human reason could never reach. It was by means of the latter, how-

ever, that the infant education of the world was carried on; and not till "*the fullness of time*," not till human reason reached its zenith, that the superior light of the Gospel was dispensed. Were the religious education of children conducted upon analogous principles, have we not reason to believe it would be attended with more success?

We who are convinced of the truth of the Christian dispensation, who see in it the display of the Divine attributes; who believe in its promises, and rejoice in its hopes; are astonished that it should so little prevail in the world. But when we consider how little pains are generally taken to impress religious sentiment on the minds of youth, and how often, from injudicious management, the pains that are taken must tend to produce effects directly opposite, our astonishment must cease. We either, like Gallio, consider it "a question of *words* and *names*," and leave it out of our plan as a matter of no importance, or we content ourselves with dogmatically propounding a few solemn propositions to our pupils, which we insist on their receiving as acknowledged truths. Their assent, at that early period, we cannot indeed be so weak as to expect; not, at least, if we permit ourselves to examine the nature of assent and dissent, rational and practical. "Rational assent to any proposition may be defined, a readiness to affirm it to be true, *proceeding from a close association of the ideas suggested by the proposition with the idea or internal feeling belonging to the word truth.* Rational dissent is the opposite to this. *Practical assent* is a readiness to act in such manner as the frequent vivid recurrency of the *rational assent* disposes us to act. Practical assent is, therefore, the natural and necessary conse-

quence of rational, *when sufficiently impressed.*"* From this definition it appears obvious, that rational assent to any proposition beyond the limits of our comprehension can never be obtained; as it is impossible it can have any assosiation with the internal feelings belonging to truth; and without rational assent to the truths of religion, how can we hope for practical?

It is observed by Doctor Reid, that the power of reflection, without which it is impossible to form notions of abstract truth, is the last of our intellectual faculties that unfolds itself. The power of observation, on the other hand, discovers itself long before an infant acquires the use of speech. As it is by means of the senses that ideas are first acquired, the curiosity is early attracted to external objects; and as the great volume of nature is open to the senses, it is even in early infancy perused with avidity and delight. The difference betwixt the works of nature and those of art is easily discoverable at a very early period of life; and the evident superiority of the former is even to the capacity of a child such an argument of the superior power and wisdom of the Creator, as will readily be comprehended. I have already hinted at the means by which the idea of his goodness ought to be impressed; and if ideas are thus grafted on the infant heart, of the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Almighty Ruler of the universe, they will, as a necessary consequence, beget the feelings of love, reverence, and gratitude; which I cannot but consider as a better foundation both for a *rational* and *practical* assent to the truths of the Gospel, than

* Hartley.

all the creeds, catechisms, and homilies, that ever poor infant was doomed to get by heart.

The power of the affections in influencing our opinions is obvious to common observation. Where the associations of religion have produced secret antipathy and disgust, the powerful principle of self-love may be considered as enlisted on the side of infidelity. The very contrary of this must be the case, where all the affections of love, esteem, and complacency, have been early engaged on the side of religion.

"The reason," says Dr. Clark, "why faith is in the New Testament always insisted upon as a moral virtue, is, because faith in the scripture sense is not barely an act of the understanding, but a mixed act of the will also; consisting very much in that *simplicity and unprejudicedness of mind*, which our Saviour calls receiving the kingdom of God as a little child; in that freedom from guile and deceit, which was the character of Nathaniel; and in that teachable disposition, and desire to know the will of God, for which the Bereans were so highly commended, *who searched the scripture daily, whether these things were true.*" Does it not appear evident, that to lay the foundation for this *teachable disposition*, we must interest the affections? If this were more generally attended to should we find the doctrine of a Divine Providence, and the influences of Divine Grace, so often rejected with contempt? Were we gradually, by considering "the things that are seen and temporal," led to the consideration of "those that are unseen and eternal," they would make a deeper impression both on our understandings and on our hearts.

Those who have been taught to contemplate the wonders of creation as the work of Divine Wisdom,

and to enjoy every blessing of existence as the gift of Infinite Goodness, will embrace, without repugnance, the doctrines of Christianity. These, as the capacity unfolds itself, ought to be presented in the simplest forms, divested as much as possible of all scholastic terms, and all incomprehensible articles of belief, however we may ourselves venerate and respect them. Instead of labouring to impress upon the tender mind an idea that salvation depends upon any metaphysical definition that forms a peculiar tenet of our particular church; we should, when he is of an age to have its tenets explained, be careful to inform him that many pious Christians entertain opinions different from ours, and that though those we have adopted appear to us most consonant to truth, we presume not to condemn those who differ from us.

A knowledge of the scriptures I look upon as a very essential part of religious education: but to render this knowledge really useful, it is not sufficient that their contents be impressed upon the memory: the lessons they contain must be made to reach the heart. Whether this can be effected by getting long passages by rote, I am more than doubtful. It is from considering scriptural knowledge as *perfectly analogous* with human learning, that the idea has ever been entertained; but the analogy is far from being complete. Analogy is, in truth, a dangerous and unwieldly weapon, which seldom fails to run beyond the point where resemblance stops. (F)

We very properly take advantage of that period when the susceptibility of memory with respect to *words* is most remarkable, to lay in a store of *words* for future use; as in the elements of grammar, arithmetic, &c. whose first principles are

learned by rote long before the mind can have any notion of their import. But with grammar, arithmetic, &c. the heart and the affections have no concern. They are merely the instruments of knowledge ; and as such, when the love of knowledge is sufficiently inspired, they will recommend themselves to the attention of the pupil, who will then find the advantage of those early lessons which were assigned as a task, and performed as a drudgery. The moral and devotional sentiments which it is our wish to breathe into the infant heart, have no analogy with the science of words, or of numbers ; they are not merely branches of knowledge connected with other branches, and necessary instruments of information ; but they are, as described by Hartley, those " to which all other branches of knowledge ought to be considered as mere preparatories and preliminaries."

Where the knowledge of scripture is forced upon children as a task ; where they are compelled to recite long portions of it by rote, in the same manner as they decline nouns and conjugate verbs ; the passages learned may be retained by the memory, but we may reasonably doubt whether they will ever impress the heart. I am, I confess, the more inclined to doubt it, because the most confirmed reprobates I have ever known, had an accurate knowledge of scripture, acquired in the manner above alluded to.

It is proper that I now explain to you my own ideas upon this subject, which have not been rashly adopted, but are the result of long observation and experience.

The first step towards inspiring your children with a veneration for the sacred writings, and with a desire of knowing something of their contents,

must be the observations they will naturally and voluntarily make upon your frequent perusal of them. While they see other books read, and dismissed, and that the bible alone remains the constant companion of your serious hours, the subject of your daily and delightful meditation, they will associate the idea of superior excellence with the bible, before they are able to read. But on the contrary, if they see it only brought out upon a tedious and gloomy Sunday, and then read as a duty and a task, the prepossession that will take place in disfavour of its contents will probably never be eradicated.

As soon as a child can read so well as to be able to understand something of what it reads, its imagination and curiosity ought to be excited by the mention of some of the passages in the Old Testament which are most likely to amuse and gratify the fancy; these afterwards, as a favour, it ought to be permitted to read. By a repetition of this, as often as occasion offers, a pretty accurate knowledge of the Old Testament will be acquired; and acquired at a period, when, notwithstanding the assertions of certain pretenders to extraordinary delicacy, the purity of the mind is incapable of being soiled by an account of manners, which, though suitable to ancient simplicity, appear gross to modern refinement; but which will pass unnoticed, where no train of ideas upon improper subjects have been previously fixed in the mind, so as to be called up by the perusal. This is, indeed, one of the reasons why I should be solicitous to have a knowledge of the historical part of the Old Testament acquired at a very early period; and that it will be more effectually attained by the means above described, than by reading it straight forwards as a

task, I am justified in asserting. As the understanding opens, a judicious preceptor will carefully point out the connecting series, which will be a new source of pleasure to the young mind.

The most formidable objection that can be made to an early acquaintance with the Old Testament, arises from the apprehension of the pupil's imbibing improper notions of the Deity from the Jewish representation of his attributes. Were this the unavoidable consequence, I confess I should think the objection conclusive ; as it will be according to the conceptions formed of the Deity, that religion will either exalt or debase the human character. But if I may speak from experience, a very little pains bestowed by the parent will sufficiently obviate all grounds of apprehension on this head, and render the notions of the Divine Nature given in the Old Testament sufficiently intelligible.

By what I have already advanced, you will perceive that I am an advocate for pressing, not only the heart and the affections, but the mind also, into the service of religion at a very early period ; but that, anxious to obtain my purpose, I would jealously guard against every means by which it may be defeated ; and would therefore, have religious truths impressed in the manner most likely to make the impression not only lasting but useful. In case I should not have explained myself sufficiently, permit me to give an example. A child of seven years old, instructed in the manner I recommend, was anxious to learn something of Solomon, whose wisdom she had often heard extolled. That part of his history was pointed out to her, which records his choice of wisdom in preference to riches or honours ; she read the passage with great delight, and so deep was the impression it made upon her

mind, that for a long time afterwards she never said her prayers, without petitioning God to give her wisdom to profit by the instructions she received, so that she might apply her heart to knowledge. How much the association of ideas thus excited might accelerate her progress in learning, it is impossible to pronounce ; but I confess I think it probable, that her confidence in the Divine Wisdom and Goodness would be more firmly established by this impression than by repeating the whole Psalter by rote.

As the understanding opens to the perception of moral truth, the sublimer doctrines of the New Testament should, in the same manner, be impressed upon the heart, at such times and seasons as the impression is likely to be most favourably received. Of this I shall have occasion to speak more at large in the subsequent volume ; I cannot, however, at present close the subject without mentioning the satisfaction I received from observing, that the person in the world, for whose judgment I have the most implicit reverence, pursued with her pupils the very plan I have here recommended. She, I hope, will pardon me for giving to the public a lesson so instructive, as the mode of illustration by example is in general more efficacious than any other.

The incident that explained to me the method of religious instruction adopted by this best of parents, was as follows. Two of her children having had a quarrel, in which each considered herself the injured party, could not, as each had something to complain of, be brought to an immediate reconciliation : at least she thought the reconciliation not so hearty as she wished it. In the course of conversation the following day, examples of virtue in the Old

and New Testament were mentioned, and the perfection of the latter extolled. Suppose, said the judicious instructress, that we were to look out for some proof of this superiority. Let us take an incident in the life of David, where his character appears to great advantage. The proposal was acquiesced in instantly, and one of the young ladies immediately read the account of David's finding his enemy Saul asleep in the cave, and generously refusing to take advantage of this event, in the manner to which he was urged by the importunity of his friends, and the passion of revenge. The remorse he felt at having so far given way to the suggestion of his passion, as to inflict a slight disgrace on his sleeping adversary, was then evinced from a perusal of the penitentiary psalm composed on the occasion. When it was observed, that the sentiments and conduct of David had excited attention and obtained applause, the superior benignity and divine forgiveness of the Blessed Jesus was referred to, and commented on with that energy which never fails to search the heart.

I appeal to the reader, whether the reflections thus suggested would be useless or transitory, and whether they would not be likely to have greater influence upon the heart and conduct, than the most arduous explanation upon any point of metaphysical theology.

"The counsels of religion," to use the words of a venerable and pious bishop,* "are not to be applied to the distempers of the soul, as men use to take hellebore; but they must dwell together with the spirit of a man, and be twisted about his understanding for ever; they must be used like nourish-

* Taylor.

ment, not like a single medicine, and upon the actual pressure of a present necessity. For counsels and wise discourses applied to an actual distemper at the best are but like strong smells to an epileptic person—sometimes they may raise him, "*but they never cure him.*" Would we have religion become this animating principle, this *stamina* of the mind, we must follow the advice of this very learned and edifying author, and administer our instruction upon religious subjects as daily bread, in such portions as the appetite calls for, and nature can digest; and not as a nauseous medicine, which they must be forced to take for the good of their souls. Thus shall we best fulfil the benign command of Him who emphatically said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and *forbid them not.*"

Adieu.

LETTER VII.

ASSOCIATIONS PRODUCING BENEVOLENCE.

State of infancy favourable to the cultivation of the benevolent affections.—Tendency of every passion to produce passions of the class to which it belongs.—Malevolent and dissocial passions inspired by the gratification of self-will.—Examples.

HAVING attended to those associations which inspire devotional sentiment, or the love of God, let us now proceed to the consideration of the associations by which the spirit of benevolence and

philanthropy is made to diffuse its divine and abiding influence over the human heart.

Benevolence, in a general sense, includes all the sympathetic affections by which we are made to rejoice in the happiness, and grieve at the misery, of others. It disposes the mind to sociality, generosity, and gratitude, and is the fountain of compassion and mercy. All the qualities belonging to benevolence have a tendency to produce peace and complacency in the breast; so that the happiness of the individual as well as of society is intimately concerned in their cultivation. The passions which it inspires, are all of the amiable class, as love, hope, joy, &c.; and these passions in their turn increase the dispositions to benevolence, a disposition for the growth and nourishment of which the goodness of Providence has in the state of infancy made ample provision.

The helplessness of the infant state is protracted in man to a period far beyond that of other animals; and this helplessness, by inspiring compassion and tenderness in the breast of adults, has a powerful tendency to keep alive the spirit of benevolence in the human heart. Wherever human policy has counteracted the wise designs of nature, by taking children from their parents at an early age, and separating them into a distinct society, for the purpose of education, the sympathetic affections have become extinct; a striking instance of which occurs in the history of ancient Sparta, where the murder of infants was, in certain circumstances, not only enjoined by the laws, but permitted by the parents without the least remorse.

Luxury, which is ever at war with nature, has, perhaps, in no instance done a greater injury to the interests of benevolence, than by introducing as a

fashion that premature separation of children from their parents, which the Spartan legislator enjoined as a duty. If the exercise of parental tenderness softens the heart, so as to render it eminently susceptible of all the sympathetic and social affections, it is the interest of society that the objects of it should not be suddenly removed from the parental roof.

According to the wise provision of nature, the fond endearments of parental love not only increase the benevolent feelings in the breast of the parent, but produce a disposition to them in the breast of the child, which is soon made sensible of the source from whence its happiness is derived. A judicious parent will take advantage of this circumstance, to encourage the growth of benevolence in the infant mind.

The pleasures they receive from others, naturally incline children to sociality and good-will; and were they, while they receive them, always made sensible of their own helplessness, they would at the same time be inspired with the feelings of generosity and gratitude. But the tenderness of parents so seldom is judicious, that the wise provision of nature for inspiring children with benevolence is commonly rendered abortive; and, instead of the amiable dispositions arising from love and gratitude, the seeds of moroseness, anger, revenge, jealousy, cruelty, and malice, are often prematurely planted in the little heart.

Let us examine into the cause of this. And here the doctrine of association presents us with a clue, by means of which we may easily explore the labyrinth.

Nature early impels the mind to seek for happiness; but before the dawn of reason and experience,

the judgments concerning it must be erroneous. In infancy, all ideas concerning it are comprised in the gratification of *will;* the propensity to this gratification is encouraged by frequent indulgence, till every notion of happiness becomes connected with it. The idea of misery becomes consequently associated with disappointment; and how far these associations may affect the mind, by producing the malevolent passions, will appear evident on a very little reflection.

We have already remarked, that the painful sensations make a more vivid as well as a more lasting impression than the pleasurable; from which it evidently follows, that the happiness derived from the gratification of *will* can never bear any proportion to the misery occasioned by its disappointment. Where the propensity to this gratification is strengthened by indulgence, the frequent repetition of disappointment will deeply impress the mind with the feelings of resentment, and thus render it liable to the reception of all the malevolent passions connected with it; while the pleasurable sensation occasioned by indulgence will produce no other effects than to augment the desire of future gratification.

An admirable illustration of this doctrine is given by Hartley, who, after observing that the gratification of self-will, if it does not always produce pleasure, yet is always so associated with the idea of pleasure in the mind, that the disappointment of it never fails to produce pain, proceeds as follows: "If the *will* was always gratified, this mere associated pleasure would, according to the present frame of our natures, absorb, as it were, all other pleasures; and thus, by drying up the source from whence it sprung, be itself dried up at last; and the

first disappointments would be intolerable. Both of which things are observable in an inferior degree, both in adults and in children after they are much indulged. *Gratifications of the will without the consequent expected pleasure, disappointments of it without the consequent expected pain, are here particularly useful to us.* And it is by this, amongst other means, that the human will is brought to a conformity with the Divine, which is the only radical cure for all our evils and disappointments, and the only earnest medium for obtaining everlasting happiness."

By the above reasoning, which is I think conclusive, it evidently appears that were the constant gratification of will possible, (which, in the present state of things, certainly is not) it would only tend to make the being so gratified miserable. The constant gratification of self-will must necessarily exclude the exercise of all the grateful passions. Where success is certain, hope can have no existence ; nor can joy be produced by attaining that which is considered as a right. Let hope and joy be excluded from the human mind, and where is happiness ?

Further, the habitual gratification of will, not only precludes the grateful passions of hope and joy, but tends to produce all the unamiable and hateful passions and dispositions of the human heart. Anger, peevishness, and pride, are, almost without exception, produced by the constant gratification of every wayward desire. The first is the father of revenge and cruelty ; the second, of displacency and discontent; and the third of arrogance, ingratitude, and contempt. Think of this, ye mothers, who, by a weak and blind indulgence of the infant will, lay

the foundation of future vice and misery to your ill-fated offspring!

Were the happiness of the *child* and the happiness of the *man* incompatible, so that whatever contributed to the latter must be deducted from the former, the overweening indulgence of parents might be excused, and the common apology, viz. "that as life is uncertain, the poor things ought to be permitted to enjoy the present," accepted as satisfactory. But may we not appeal to every person who has had the misfortune to live for any time with a family of spoiled children, for a sanction to our assertion, that the gratification of will has only been productive of misery.

In the career of indulgence the fondest parents must somewhere stop. There are certain boundaries which folly itself will not at all times be willing to overleap. The pain of the disappointment that must then ensue, will be intolerably aggravated by all the discordant passions fostered by preceding indulgence.

A child, whose infant will has been habituated to the discipline of obedience, submits to disappointment, as to inevitable necessity, with cheerfulness. Nor will disappointment to such an one so frequently occur, a wholsesome check having been early put upon the extravagance of desire. Whilst, on the contrary, the satiety consequent upon the fruition of every wish sets the imagination to work to find out new and untried sources of pleasure. I once saw a child make itself miserable for a whole evening, because it could not have the birds that flew through the garden, to play with. In vain did the fond mother promise that a bird should be procured to-morrow, and that it should be all his own, and that he should have a

pretty gilded cage to keep it in, which was far better than the nasty high trees on which it now perched. "No, no, that would not do; it must be caught now; he would have it now, and at no other time!"

"Well, my pretty darling, don't cry," returns Mamma, "and you shall have a bird, a pretty bird, love, in a minute;" casting a significant look on her friends, as she retired to speak to the servants. She soon returned with a young chicken in her hand, which she covered so as not to be immediately seen.

"Here, darling, is a pretty, pretty bird for you; but you must not cry so. Bless me, if you cry at that rate, the old black dog will come and fetch you in a minute. There now, that's my good boy! now dry your eyes, love, and look at the pretty bird."

At these words little master snatches it from her hand, and perceiving the deception, dashes it on the ground with tenfold fury. All was now uproar and dismay, till the scene becoming rather too oppressive, even for the mother, a servant was called, who took the little struggling victim of passion in his arms, and conveyed him to the nursery. Such are the effects of the unlimited indulgence of self-will! Yet this fond mother persuaded herself that she obeyed the dictates of pure affection! Had she, however, been accustomed to reflect upon the motives that influenced her conduct, she would have found selfishness in this instance the governing principle.

Parental affection has been described by many philosophers as a refined species of self-love. Considered merely as an *instinct*, it undoubtedly is so. But the same instinct in the brute creation only

leads to the care and protection of their young, and I may add, to the education also; the care of the dams in this particular, both in the feathered and four-footed race, being well known. But never does it lead to a false and dangerous indulgence.

Were parental affection in man, as in the brute creation, merely instinctive, instinct might be trusted to as an unerring guide. But to man a higher behest is granted, and therefore in him instinct is feeble and uncertain. And yet by mere instinctive tenderness do parents permit themselves to be governed, in opposition to the dictates of that reason which would teach them that true affection ought to study the *real* and *permanent* happiness of the beloved object.

It is not uncommon for parents, while they forego the exercise of their own reason, to trust to the future reason of their children for counteracting the effects of their injudicious management. But does experience justify their confidence? I believe every person who has traced the rise and progress of the passions in individuals, will answer in the negative.

The frequent recurrence of any passion, even from our earliest years, begets a tendency to that passion, till it is strengthened into a habit, and becomes as it were interwoven with the constitution. How difficult, how next to impossible, it is then to conquer, all can witness! Reason may govern, and religion may in some measure subdue it, so as to prevent its excess to the prejudice of society; but by nothing less than a miracle can it be totally eradicated from the breast. The more worthy the heart, the more delicate the conscience, the more bitter will be the sensations of regret and self-abhorrence which a person liable to the dominion of passion, and at the same time under the influence

of principle, must frequently endure. How many are the agonizing tears shed in private by the irascible! while, perhaps, the sudden ebullition of wrath that brought them forth, may have fixed a dagger in the heart of a friend doomed there to rankle for ever. And yet anger, being a passion which quickly vents itself by explosion, and is then annihilated is less generally obnoxious than peevishness or pride which have no crisis, but which continue to operate without rest or interval.

Which of these passions will be most powerfully excited by the early indulgence of self-will, and the frequent disappointments inevitably consequent upon such indulgence, depends, perhaps, upon the organization or constitution of the infant. In robust habits, the passion of anger is most frequent; while in the more delicate, peevishness is commonly generated. By pride both are aggravated to an extreme degree; for pride, restless as a jackall, is perpetually on the hunt to find food and nourishment for these tormentors. At every disappointment of the self-will that has been accustomed to habitual indulgence, pride takes the alarm, and calls on anger or peevishness to revenge the injury.

And here it is worthy of remark, how the passions act and re-act upon each other. The frequent gratification of will engenders pride, and pride augments the desire for the gratification of will, till it becomes insatiable. Hence the love of power predominates, and hence a disposition to tyranny appears to be inherent in the mind of man. Many, alas! are the tyrannical husbands and fathers that have been formed in the nursery!

The unamiable passions, like the lean kine in Pharoah's dream, which devoured the goodly, have a strong tendency to destroy the amiable. Indeed

they are, in a great measure, incompatible with each other. The social affections are kept alive by a sense of mutual dependence and mutual obligation. But pride acknowledges no dependence; and arrogates to itself all the attentions and good offices of others, not as a matter of favour, but of right. Hence, while it is ever ready to take offence at the slightest neglect, it is never warmed by kindness into gratitude.

Observe the boy who has been a mother's darling, and to whom his sisters have from infancy been obliged to do homage. How often are their endeavours to please him received with contempt, while the most trifling offence is aggravated into an injury. Follow him into the world. There, alas! mortification and disappointment attend his steps, for there no one regards him in the light in which he has been taught to regard himself. No one comes up to his ideas of propriety in their conduct towards him. If favoured by fortune, he may, indeed, meet with many flatterers, but he will never make a friend. The irritation to which he is perpetually exposed will by degrees expel the feelings of benevolence from his heart; and, perhaps, even the parent, to whose fond indulgence he owes his misery, may be the first to feel the effects of his malevolence and ingratitude.* Indignant at the world, which he thinks in league to torment and vex him, he perhaps resolves to make himself amends in the tranquillity of domestic life, and makes choice of such a partner as he imagines will

* The just and striking point of view in which Dr. Moore has placed this subject in the life of Zeluco, must speak more forcibly to the heart than volumes of reasoning. It is a picture which every mother ought to study. But, alas! where is the mother whose fond partiality will allow her to see one feature of Zeluco in her own spoiled darling?

be most obsequious and obedient. Dreading the control of reason he carefully avoids a woman of cultivated mind ; and is, perhaps, made sensible, when too late, that it is not always the most weak who are the most conformable. In his family, however, he resolves to rule ; and there he does rule with despotic sway. Perhaps he meets with a partner who is led, by love of peace and sense of duty, to study the gratification of his will in the most minute particulars. But his will soon becomes too capricious for gratification. The passions which he has indulged, are incompatible with the enjoyment of satisfaction, tranquillity, or contentment. The gratification of these passions may wound his conscience, and irritate his feelings, by a sense of having inspired hatred or contempt in the breasts of others, but can never bring peace to his heart. The pleasure of making others miserable has little in it of the nature of felicity.

Yet may we sometimes observe the wife of such a man as I have here described, endeavouring, by means of unlimited indulgence, to excite the very same passions and propensities in the breast of her son, of which she has felt the fatal consequences in the husband ; as if she resolved to revenge on some other innocent woman all the misery she has herself endured !—Her daughter-in-law may share her fate, and probably imitate her example ; and thus may pride, cruelty, and injustice, be produced in the family, *ad infinitum !*

As the operations of reason are slow, and her induction liable to error, it has pleased the Almighty Creator to make not only reason, but the passions themselves, our school-masters in virtue. Every passion whose inordinate gratification is inimical to the happiness of others, is likewise inimical

to our own felicity; while the grateful and benevolent passions and affections of our nature bring in the exercise pleasure, and on reflection peace. Is it not, then, a sufficient argument against producing, by early indulgence, a predominant desire for the gratification of self-will, to show that the instruments employed by this desire to procure its gratification are all of the unworthy class? The love of power has other servants besides anger, cruelty, arrogance, and resentment. Selfishness often stoops to seek the aid of cunning; and I have known the happy art of objecting to whatever was proposed by others, and of finding fault with every thing that did not originate in the objector, employed with as much effect in procuring the uncontrolled gratification of self-will, as any of the irascible passions. But compare the happiness which results from this gratification with that which springs in a generous and benevolent heart, when concious of having made a sacrifice for another's good. How different the sensations, how different their effects upon the mind! The selfish and unsocial satisfaction produced by the former, so far from tranquillizing the mind, seems only to prepare it for fresh ebullitions of spleen and peevishness; while the latter diffuses the sweet serenity of cheerfulness and complacency over the whole soul. These opposite dispositions have each a natural tendency to lead to a repetition of the same sort of conduct by which they were severally produced; the progress of vice and virtue resembling the laws of gravitation in regard to accelerated motion. The truth of this may be illustrated by innumerable instances. But these must occur to the recollection of every reader; for little must they have been observant of human character, who have not traced

the progress of vicious or virtuous propensities in the minds of those around them.

The malevolent passions produced by frequent irritation, the certain consequence of great indulgence, appear at first but as a small cloud that occasionally overcasts the mental horizon, and which, it is hoped, the sun of reason will dispel. But, aas! it soon grows too thick for the sun of reason to penetrate. During the sprightliness of youth, it may often brighten into transient gleams of generosity and affection; but if not repelled by the strength of religious principle, it returns in ten-fold darkness, till at length, having extinguished all the amiable and all the endearing qualities of the heart, it spreads its gloomy wings over the soul, and rages in all the horror of a perpetual tempest.*

The benevolent affections, on the contrary, are like the soft and gentle light of morning, as described by the poet:

> "At first faint gleaming on the dappl'd East,
> Till far o'er ether spreads the widening glow;
> And from before the lustre of her face,
> White break the clouds away."

The longer the mind has enjoyed the sweet tranquillity of benevolence, the more unwilling will it be to give admission to the turbulent passions which are destructive of peace: and the more frequently it has rejoiced in the consciousness of having conferred felicity on others, the more will it be disposed to a repetition of acts of beneficence, charity, and mercy. Of what importance, then, is the ear-

* Upon the principle which I have here unfolded, it is observed by Lord Kames, that "A passion founded on a peculiar propensity subsists generally for ever, which is the case of pride, envy, and malice; objects are never wanting to inflame the propensity into a passion."—Elements of Criticism, vol. i. p. 122.

ly management of children; since upon it, in a great measure, depends the vice and virtue, the happiness and misery, of the world! And yet this is the period consigned to the care of ignorance and folly!

Before the period assigned for the commencement of education, such a propensity to the malignant passions is frequently generated in the infant mind, as not all the pains of the most careful and judicious preceptors can ever after eradicate. And here I may safely appeal to all who are concerned in the education of youth; let them say, how often they have been able to conquer the spirit of self-will, with its attendant passions, pride, arrogance, anger, resentment, peevishness, and ingratitude. If these are not stifled in the birth, they may afterwards be cut in pieces by the rod of chastisement; but, like the Polypus, they will preserve the vital principle, and be immediately re-produced.

How much of the tendency to passion may be referred to physical causes, it is not for me to examine; it is sufficient for my purpose to show, that they are often produced by an early an indiscreet indulgence of self-will. That this indulgence generates pride, we know from experience. That the disappointment of its gratification, after the habit of indulgence, produces the violent and ungrateful passions, is likewise evident. And that the frequent recurrence of any passion produces a disposition to that and similar passions, has been, I hope, clearly and satisfactorily proved.

To prevent any mistake that may arise from my strenuous inculcation of the necessity of the early control of self-will, I think it necessary to observe, that if injudicious indulgence become injurious to the mind, in consequence of the frequent irritation it occasions, (which is obvious from the fretfulness

observable in all spoiled children ;) it follows, that injudicious severity, by producing a similar irritation, must be equally injurious to the disposition. But do we not often see the one follow the other? A poor child, accustomed to have every thing he cries for, will sometimes cry for things Mamma may not choose to give, and persevere in crying, till he exhausts her patience, and then he is to be whipped! People first indulge children for their own pleasure, and then chastise the poor infants for the natural consequence of that indulgence; and it is, perhaps, difficult to say, which injures the temper most. "You must not touch this! Don't do that!" are injunctions for ever in the mouth of a foolish mother; who, nevertheless, permits *this* to be touched, and *that* to be done, with impunity; till some petty mischief is accomplished which she considers of consequence, though it is impossible for the child to make the distinction, and then he must again be whipped!

Self-will grows so rapidly upon indulgence, that a capricious humour is its unavoidable consequence. This caprice, when it becomes troublesome and unmanageable, is likewise punished by a whipping, and to this whipping does the mother appeal as a sufficient testimony that she does not spoil her child! If it be possible—and that it is possible I have had ample proofs—by an early habit of implicit obedience to prevent all this whipping, would not the mother, as well as the child, be the happier for it? Even in the nurse's arms may a notion of the necessity of this obedience be obtained.

The prohibitions of a parent ought to be judicious, but they ought to be decisive. When they are made so from earliest infancy, they will not often be controverted. A salutary check will thus be

put upon the gratification of will, and the wish for that gratification will thus become habitually subordinate to the will of the parent. This requires only steadiness and self-command; but steadiness and self-command are seldom the virtues of young mothers and nurses; and yet without these, there are no hopes that the education of a child will ever be conducted upon consistent principles.

The idea of obedience ought to be early and firmly associated with ideas of security and happiness. And here again the imbecility and helplessness of infancy afford us the means of effecting our salutary purpose. Entirely dependent on the wisdom and experience of others, to guard them from the dangers to which they are hourly exposed, children might be easily made to learn the advantages of obedience; and they infallibly would learn it, if obedience were properly enforced. Were all prohibitions *made absolute*, and the necessity of issuing them guarded against as much as possible, so that they should not often occur, it would go far towards rendering obedience natural and easy; for it would then appear a matter of necessity, and as such be submitted to without reluctance.

I was some years ago intimately acquainted with a respectable and happy family, where the behaviour of the children excited my admiration. One morning, on entering the drawing-room, I found the little group of laughing cherubs at high play round their fond mother, who was encouraging their sportive vivacity, which was at that time noisy enough, but which on my entrance she hushed into silence by a single word. No bad humour followed; but as the spirits, which had been elevated by the preceding amusement, could not at once sink into a state of quiescence, the judicious mother did not

require what she knew could not, without difficulty, be complied with ; but calmly addressing them, gave the choice of remaining in the room without making any noise, or of going to their own apartment, where they might make what noise they pleased. The eldest and youngest of the four preferred the former, while the two others went away to the nursery. Those who stayed with us amused themselves by cutting paper in a corner, without giving any interruption to our conversation. I could not refrain from expressing my admiration at their behaviour, and begged to know by what art she had attained such a perfect government of her children's wills and actions. "By no art," returned this excellent parent, "but that of teaching them from the very cradle an *implicit submission*. Having never once been permitted to disobey me, they have no idea of attempting it ; but you see, I always give them a choice, when it can be done with propriety ; if it cannot, whatever I say they know to be a law, like that of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not."

The happy effects of this discipline were soon rendered more conspicuous, during the very long illness of this amiable mother ; who, when confined to her chamber, continued to regulate her family through the medium of her eldest daughter, then a child of eleven years old.

Affectionate as obedient, this amiable girl not only attended her mother's sick bed with the most tender assiduity, but acting as her mother's substitute towards her little brothers and sisters, directed their conduct and behaviour ; and was obeyed with the same unmurmuring submission as if their mother had herself been present. Was her mother so

ill as to render noise particularly injurious—all was, by her care, hushed to silence. She invented plays for the little ones that would make no disturbance, and taught them to speak in whispers. It was sufficient rewards for their forbearance, to be told by her that Mamma sent them a kiss, and thanked them for their goodness, *and that she had been the better for it.* What a foundation was here laid for the operation of benevolence!

Let us compare this with the behaviour of an indulged child, to whom the gratification of self-will had become habitual, who had never been taught to submit to aught but force, and to whom submission was consequently hateful, exciting all the painful emotions of anger, indignation, and resentment. I have known such a child make use of a parent's illness as a means of procuring the gratification of all its capricious humours; when, seeing the pains that were taken to prevent noise, it would on the least opposition cry out, "if you don't give it me this minute, I'll roar!" and accordingly she would roar till she had what she wanted.

What are the dispositions which, in the latter case, must have naturally been inspired? To the pleasing associations attached to the gratification of self-will, the idea of inflicting pain upon others must likewise be attached. What a foundation for that cruelty which is always allied to a tyrannical disposition! Nor is this all. The exultation consequent upon thus carrying her point, must have engendered pride; and pride, by aggravating opposition into injury, brought forth anger and resentment; and from the extravagance of childish humours, this opposition must frequently recur, so that these hateful passions must soon gain the

strength of habit, and a propensity to them be for ever fixed and rooted in the disposition.

Let us suppose the same indulgence continued through the early stages of youth in the fond hope that reason will conquer passion, as the child advances to maturity.

Were the nature of passion, with regard to the influence it has upon the judgment, properly attended to, I believe this fond hope would be soon annihilated. On a mind under the dominion of passion the calm suggestions of reason can have little influence, supposing the calm suggestions of reason possible in such circumstances. But it is not possible; for to a mind under the dominion of the selfish passions, *that* appears to be just and reasonable, which is in reality unjust and unreasonable in the last degree; because the idea of *just* and *reasonable* are all by pride associated with the idea of the gratification of self-will.* Does it not hence appear evident, that the farther such a person as I have been describing advances in life, the more firmly will the dominion of passion be established in the heart? Reason will, indeed, be soon taught by experience to discern the necessity of governing, or at least of disguising, these feelings in the company of strangers or superiors; but if this restraint be not of sufficient duration to induce a habit of self-government, and if that habit be not strengthened and confirmed by motives of religion, occasional

* The *reasonings* of the traffickers in human misery, the self-interested abettors of the Slave-Trade, may with propriety be referred to as an illustration of my present argument. The imagination inflamed by the passion of avarice, aggravated by pride and ambition, sees it *just* and *reasonable* that one part of the species should inflict upon another every kind and degree of misery that human nature can sustain, in order to gratify the avarice, pride, and luxury, of a few worthless individuals!

restraint will only serve to increase the impetuosity of passion.

The salutary effect of long continued restraint upon the irascible passions, is a strong argument in favour of the cultivation of that politeness, which, though too often a fictitious substitute of true gentleness, is yet favourable to the cultivation of the reality. Were the same laws of politeness which governs our intercourse with strangers, always observed in the more familiar intercourse of domestic life, it would prove a sovereign antidote against the frequent recurrence of those jars and wrangles, by which the happiness of so many families is destroyed. True politeness consists, not merely in a strict adherence to the forms of ceremony: *it consists in an exquisite observance of the feelings of others, and an invariable respect for those feelings.* By this definition, it claims alliance with benevolence, and may sometimes be found as genuine in the cottage as the court. A spurious species, adulterated by pride, is, however, in far more common use; and this, being too costly for home consumption, is usually worn with our best clothes, and, like them, reserved for particular occasions; nor does the casual restraint it puts upon the feelings, essentially promote the cause of virtue. To it, indeed, society is indebted for all its charms; and this consideration would surely be sufficient to recommend its constant practice at home as well as abroad, did not self-will and its unruly train of passions interpose. To self-will the restraint imposed by politeness is intolerable. Pride has no respect for the feelings of others, but imperiously demands universal attention to its own. The least, even imaginary, omission of this attention brings forth resentment, either expressed in the sullen tone of peevish discontent, or in the

louder notes of brawling anger. In the familiar intercourse of domestic life, a thousand opportunities daily occur for exciting these passions, by the petty oppositions which self-will has to encounter; and where all the members of a family are equally eager for its gratification, the scenes of discord that ensue are horrible. But supposing that only one, one darling child, in whom these passions have been fostered by indulgence, should be subject to their influence, I fear it will be quite sufficient to destroy the charm of domestic harmony. When this has been so repeatedly wounded, as to call aloud for a remedy, the only one that presents itself is that of sending the child to school. There, it is hoped, the passions will be subdued, and the mind opened by education to the control of reason. How far this hope is likely to be justified by the event, is worthy of our consideration. But this must be reserved for another letter, the present has already too far exceeded its bounds.

Adieu.

LETTER VIII.

SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

Inefficacy of the usual methods employed to counteract the effects of injudicious indulgence.—Vanity: its consequences.—Indolence of parents renders them frequently blind to the faults of their children.—Happy consequences of early obedience.

It is not at present my business to enter on the peculiar advantages or disadvantages of public edu-

cation; all that now concerns me, is to examine how far it can operate in ameliorating the tempers and dispositions of the heart.

I presume, it is with a view towards counteracting the effects of home indulgence, that the system of *fagging*, which prevails in some of our most celebrated seminaries, was at first introduced; but how far it contributes to this desirable end may reasonably be doubted.

The spirit of self-will is not to be subdued by a temporary subjection to a whimsical and capricious tyranny. It does not thence learn to impose restraint upon itself; but while it sullenly submits to superior strength, gathers force from the fond anticipation of the moment when its turn of despotism shall commence. It appears, then, that this temporary subjection serves but to whet the appetite for tyranny, and to add malignity to revenge. Slaves are ever observed to be the most cruel taskmaster; and I make no doubt we should find, on examination, that the little *fag* who has most severely suffered from the cruelty of the great boy, to whom he has been forced to yield an unwilling submission, becomes in his turn the most cruel despot.

Let us suppose the self-willed boy sent to a school where fagging is prohibited, and were a proper degree of discipline is maintained. That this discipline has a salutary tendency, we cannot doubt, when we consider that it is "by *gratifications of the will without the consequent expected pleasure, and disappointments of it without the consequent expected pain*," that the associations producing self-will are most powerfully counteracted. The idea of pain, early associated with the ideas of restraint and application, will naturally make the will revolt

from them: but when by habit, by sympathy, and by the pleasure attending success, this association shall have been in some measure weakened, the will must necessarily receive a salutary check; which will be further improved by the punishments consequent on its gratification; these punishments changing the associated idea of pleasure, attached to the gratification of will, into an associated idea of pain. Were these happy effects of discipline allowed to operate fully, they might no doubt prove in the end effectual; but many circumstances concur to prevent their operation to any extent.

The discipline of the school-room is instituted to serve one particular purpose, and provided that be obtained, it is deemed sufficient. If the demands made upon the attention and the memory be complied with, there is no question asked concerning the tempers and dispositions of the heart. These are left to the discipline of companions: and what does it produce? The tyranny of the strong opposed by the artifices of the weak. Force and cunning equally directed by selfishness. And this is called an epitome of the world!!

Let us turn from this melancholy picture, and pourtray another for ourselves in more pleasing colours. Supposing the will to have been subdued by early habits of obedience, and all the first associations of the mind to have been strictly attended to, so as to have produced the first principles of piety and benevolence, a tendency to all the amiable passions and affections of the heart; generosity and gratitude glowing in the breasts of the ardent; sympathy and tenderness in the souls of the gentle; while candour, simplicity, and truth, were alike the portion of all. Let us suppose a school composed of such children, and governed by a man of

sense and discretion; who knew how to render the introduction to knowledge subservient to the cause of virtue. Improvement might then, indeed, be expected with confidence; for not only from the instructions of the master, but from the social intercourse of the scholars, improvement would inevitably result. The friendships formed in such a society would spring from congeniality of taste and sympathetic affection; from gratitude for kind offices, or esteem for extraordinary qualities; which principles of friendship are all excluded by the selfish and unsocial passions which prevail among boys who have been spoiled by previous indiscreet indulgence. It cannot be too often repeated, that where by this indulgence every idea of pleasure is connected with the gratification of self-will, the benevolent and social affections must be annihilated. Every competitor is viewed as an enemy by pride and selfishness; and the reward bestowed on merit, which calls forth the pleasing emotions of sympathy in the breasts of the generous, excites in the self-willed the painful feelings of envy and displacency. I have seen a young person of extraordinary endowments, but whose dispositions had been ruined in infancy, turn pale at the praises of a school-fellow, and show such symptoms of hatred and antipathy to the object of applause, as plainly evinced the strength of the malevolent passions in the heart. When these passions have obtained such an ascendency, it is in vain to hope that by the discipline of a school they can be eradicated. All that the best school can do for them, is to restrain them by means of terror; and this restraint may so far operate, as to teach the pupil to conceal emotions that would lead to disgrace or punishment; but will not prevent their

influence, where neither disgrace nor punishment are apprehended.

If school discipline can do little towards ameliorating the temper and disposition with regard to boys; I am afraid that with girls it can do still less. In the course of a classical education, there is a method, a regularity, that insensibly produces correspondent habits in the mind; and though the cultivation of the understanding may not be always as much attended to as it might and ought, yet from the very nature of their studies, associations must be formed favourable to its improvement; and the improvement of the reasoning faculties is surely one step towards the attainment of power over the passions. But in the education of girls, alas! its influence is seldom tried. With the objects to which their attention is directed, the reasoning faculties have no concern. In the routine of accomplishments to which they are destined, no one power of the mind is called into exercise, except memory. And so distinct from each other, so multiform, so perpetually changing, are the objects of their attention, that it is impossible the mind should ever be long enough fixed, to acquire habits of regularity or arrangement.

Where the pride attached to self-will prevails, emulation must degenerate into envy, and envy cannot be better classed than it is in our Litany, with *hatred*, *malice*, and *uncharitableness*; so that where it is made a powerful instrument in education, there can be little hopes of bettering the dispositions of the heart.

Vanity, not appearing on a superficial view to be a dissocial passion, is less the object of our hatred than of our contempt. But when we consider

its effect upon the mind, we must deprecate the introduction of it, as the kindling of a destructive flame, which time cannot extinguish, and which reason cannot quench; which blinds the understanding, and warps the judgment, rendering flattery not only pleasant but necessary as the food it feeds on, and giving a disrelish for truth. Gratified vanity, it is true, is always complacent, and on this account wears the aspect of benevolence. But does it sympathize in the sorrows of the afflicted? Does it glow with the honest warmth of gratitude? Is it capable of making a generous sacrifice for another's good? No: Vanity, so far from partaking of these characteristics of benevolence, is ever *cold* and *selfish*, alike incapable of tender sympathy and generous affection. And yet vanity is deemed a harmless instrument in education; and in that of girls especially, is resorted to as the only means of inducing application to the troublesome trifles which form the sum total of their studies and pursuits!

In endeavouring to show, from the nature of school education, the very small chance there is of its being the means of rectifying the wayward humours, and exterminating the ungrateful passions, begotten and cherished by early indulgence, I do not mean to cast any reflection on the conductors of these seminaries. I am rather inclined to admire the patience that is unprovoked by the provocations of the insolent; the assiduity that is unwearied by the waywardness of the idle; and the energy that is unsubdued by the contradictions of the splenetic, the peevish, and the disobedient. With all this variety of humours have teachers to contend; and to contend with a manifest disadvantage, arising from that early pride, consequent upon the indulgence of self-will, which is first permitted to be exercised on

domestics, and is then extended to teachers, who are likewise looked upon in the light of hirelings, and consequently subjected to the contempt even of infant arrogance.

And here permit me a short digression, to call your attention to the increasing influence of pride, which has kept full pace with increase of luxury, and which appears in no instance more glaring than in that I have just now alluded to. Compare the airs of insolence and contempt with which we now see girls behave towards the most respectable teachers, with that awe and veneration with which they used formerly to be inspired towards them. Methinks I now behold the venerable matron, who first initiated me into the mysteries of plain-work and embroidery, surrounded by the little attentive group who trembled at her frown. She did not often frown, for a look, a word, was sufficient to ensure obedience. I do not recollect that her will was ever disputed in a single instance. We read to her by turns, as she thought it most convenient for us; and the instant her desire was known, it was complied with, without an attempt at reasoning or wrangling upon the propriety of her choice of reader or of book. Her pupils were of very different ranks in society, but perfectly upon an equality in her presence. Nor did it at all detract from veneration, even in the mind of the richest among us, that the salary she received for our instruction was no more than five shillings a quarter! Does not this manifest, in glaring colours, the influence of early association? Children, accustomed from infancy to associate ideas of respect and reverence with age and wisdom, independent of situation, and taught to consider instruction as a benefit, could not but regard their instructers in the light of benefactors, to

whom they owed veneration and gratitude. Happy consequence of undepraved simplicity! Happy foundation for those virtues so peculiarly necessary as well as graceful in the female character.

If the unamiable tempers, and discordant passions, born of early indulgence, be so powerful as to resist the influence of discipline, where some sort of discipline prevails, (which in all schools it must of necessity) what is to be expected from a home education under the eye of the parents, to whose indiscreet indulgence the rise of these tempers and passions is to be attributed?

When infantile prattle has lost its charm, when the child can no longer be considered as a plaything to be toyed with for amusement, and when the little wayward humours that were so pretty in the baby begin to be felt troublesome in the child, it often happens that the indulgence of parents is suddenly changed into severity. The perpetual and unexpected crossings of its will which the child is then doomed to experience, cannot fail to call forth all the resentment of its little soul; expressed according to previous dispositions and constitutional tendency, either by anger, sullenness, or obstinate perverseness; and these tempers are perhaps again increased by the improper methods taken to effect their cure. The disposition to benevolence is thus destroyed; and too often does it happen, that the disposition to malevolence is introduced in its room: for the frequent recurrence of anger, or peevishness, or resentment, begets a tendency to hatred and ill-will, which may continue to rankle in the heart for ever.

That pride which fixes an adventitious value on whatever belongs to self, is apt to exaggerate all the good qualities of children into perfections, while it

throws a thick veil over the bad. This selfish blindness is admirably exposed by Mrs. More, who well observes, that "ill judging tenderness is only a concealed *self-love*, which cannot bear to be witness to the uneasiness which a present disappointment, or difficulty, or vexation, would cause to a darling child; but which yet does not scruple, by improper gratification, to store up for it future miseries, which the child will infallibly suffer, though it will be at a distant period, which the selfish mother will be saved the pain of beholding. Another principle something different from this, although it may properly fall under the head of selfishness, seems to actuate some parents in their conduct toward their children: I mean, a certain slothfulness of mind, a love of ease, which imposes a voluntary blindness, and makes them not choose to see what will give them trouble to combat."

The indolence of mind, which is often the accompaniment of a sweet and easy temper, is, perhaps, a more frequent cause of miscarriage in private education than any other. It is a deceiver which, under the specious appearance of uncommon goodness, produces the most mischievous effects. Like charity, it "hopeth all things, believeth all things, and endureth all things;" but effecteth nothing. To a person of principle engaged in education this easy indolence of temper is the greatest of all misfortunes, because it operates in such a manner as not to alarm the conscience. It never examines into motives, it never probes the heart, or corrects the judgment, or restrains the passions, but contents itself with setting an example of moderation, and giving lessons on virtue. How ineffectual these may prove, where the passions

have been permitted to reign without control, is beautifully exemplified in the history of Eli and his sons, as it is given in the simple and impressive language of scripture. Happy were it, if the judgment pronounced against this indulgent father, at which it was said, "that the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle," was engraven on every parent's heart.

Where, by the early unrestrained indulgence of self-will, the passions have been kindled into a flame, there is no need of a prophet from the Lord to foretell the unhappy consequences. But to these consequences the easy and indolent mother is obstinately blind; and while the discerning eye may behold in her children the seeds of every vice, she thanks God they are not vicious! But of what vices can children be guilty? If they are now obstinate and disobedient, or passionate, peevish, and self-willed, is it not enough to alarm us for their future virtue? If they are in early life foolish, indolent, and trifling, how are these habits to be broken when they come to riper age? Where is the security that they will ever be broken? These habits, I shall be told, will all be conquered, and all the bad passions be subdued, by reason, as soon as the child is old enough to listen to its dictates. "Let the understanding be convinced of the advantages of virtue," say they, "and there is no doubt but that the conduct will be virtuous." This sort of argument in favour of an early indulgence of the passions puts one in mind of the quack-doctor in the farce, who wished his patient to have all manner of diseases, in order to show the efficacy of his panacea in removing them. It supposes reason to work as a charm, and takes it for granted that the understanding acts separately and inde-

pendently of the passions and affections; that it is at all times superior to their influence, and that it is always capable of controlling their impetuosity.

Little must they have been accustomed to the task of self-examination, who can thus argue. Little must they have observed on human character, who have not in innumerable instances perceived the understanding dictating the opinions, while the passions governed the conduct. Where the selfish and dissocial passions have by frequent recurrence become habitual, it is in vain that we convince the reason of the bad consequences of their indulgence.

The reason may be convinced most fully, and after full conviction have cause, on the first assaults of passion, to exclaim with the Apostle, "That I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; *but what I hate, that do I!*—for to *will* is present with me, *but how to perform that which is good I find not.*" For such as thus feel the inefficiency of reason to the control of the corrupt passions and desires of the heart, the only remedy is that applied to by the Apostle. The wisdom of man may probe the wound, but will never effect its cure.

The sovereign efficacy of religion in changing the heart I readily admit, and while I bow with reverence and gratitude to the Throne of Grace, join my feeble voice to the emphatic conclusion of the Apostle, and "thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." But while I profess my confidence in the power of Divine Grace, I avail myself of the high authority already quoted, to condemn the conduct of those, who, by early fostering the seeds of passion, suffer their children to "abide in sin, in hopes that grace may abound."

With the particular systems which have been built on a few scattered texts of scripture, I have

no concern ; the whole tenor of the Gospel dispensation, with the whole tenor of the arguments adduced by the Apostles for its elucidation, is the wide foundation on which I build, in the full conviction that nothing solid or lasting can be erected on a narrower basis. In full assurance of the efficacy of repentance, and of Divine aid to sincere purposes of amendment, I would earnestly recommend such an early and uniform attention to the culture of the heart, as should prevent the growth of that pride which is adverse to contrition, and allay the fervour of those desires which " war against the soul."

From this attention to the heart we are, I fear, sometimes misled by our zeal for the cultivation of the understanding ; towards which the mere attainment of knowledge is too often deemed the only requisite. In our ardour to accomplish our favourite purpose, we forget that the passions we employ to assist us, may thus gather strength and attain ascendancy, till at length they defeat the very end for which we called them to our aid. We forget the narrow range of human knowledge, and the still narrower bounds of human intellect, which, when it has been stimulated by pride, is apt to be puffed up with a very limited degree of acquirement. Hence the language of contempt and invective called forth by every opposition of sentiment, or even difference in taste. Hence, too, the assumed superiority of little minds on account of their accidental attainments. Let us look abroad into the world ; let us peruse the instructive page of human character ; and we shall be convinced, that talents which have been called forth by vanity and ambition, are seldom employed in the cause of virtue. They are the dazzling lights which shine

but to mislead. They shed a lustre on dirty paths, and attract the unwary from the plain road of truth and righteousness.

Were a proper attention paid to the regulation of the passions and affections of the heart from earliest infancy, as a foundation for the cultivation of the intellect, these false associations which warp the understanding and cloud the judgment, would effectually be removed; but while the passions are in infancy encouraged, in childhood uncontrolled, and in youth applied as instruments to effect the purposes of the tutor, what, alas! is to be expected in maturer age?

If we seriously desire to implant the benevolent affections in the infant heart, we must guard it with vigilance against pride, vanity, and envy; and for this end it will be extremely necessary to examine our own hearts, and set a watch upon our own conduct; taking special care that what we call *affection* may not be tinctured by the very pride and vanity we deprecate. If our attention be prompted by *pure* affection, it will be directed to the happiness of the object; if by an affection in which the selfish passions mingle, it will be directed to adventitious circumstances, with which the real happiness of the child has no concern. Pure affection will guard against every danger to which the inexperience and helplessness of infancy may be exposed, but it will not protract the period of helplessness and inexperience by unnecessary attendance and prevention; far less will it permit weakness and imbecility to assume the arrogance of command. The child, who knows itself the first object of attention to a whole family, who finds itself surrounded by beings who have no other employment but to gratify its capricious humours, or to assist its weakness, and

supply its wants, cannot fail of acquiring an early idea of its own consequence, and of thus having the seeds of pride sown in its heart. It may be worthy of a mother's observation, to mark the effects which the constant notice bestowed upon an infant has upon the mind. The child that has been accustomed to it cannot brook neglect; and so very early is this idea of self-consequence inspired, that I have seen an infant of six months old, who had been accustomed, on being brought into the room, to excite immediate attention, burst into a passion, and scream with rage and disappointment, on being permitted to remain a few minutes without being spoken to. Would it not be well to counteract this by frequent repetition of these disappointments?

By being made occasionally to feel its weakness, a child learns to accept of the service of others, as a benefit which inspires love and gratitude. This may be done without the least harshness or severity; and, indeed, I am fully persuaded, that by proper attention, the necessity for the exercise of any degree of harshness or severity, may be entirely precluded.

The harmony that subsists among the virtues, is worthy of our highest admiration; nor can it be too often contemplated, or too deeply impressed. Filial duty prepares the mind for divine obedience; and filial love and gratitude opens the heart to all the benevolent affections. Where the idea of duty either to God or parent is associated with slavish fear, unmixed with love and gratitude, it will produce a train of gloomy and discordant passions, which will render obedience an irksome and hateful task. It is then a painful yoke, from which the mind will emancipate itself as soon as possible. But where notions of filial duty and divine obedience

are early and firmly associated with the ideas of esteem, complacency, and delight; where a sense of received benefits has awakened a sense of correspondent gratitude, and a consciousness of weakness has inspired humility, while the happiness in which the heart rejoices is looked on as the gift of goodness and of love, all the best affections of the soul must inevitably be called forth.

It has been remarked by an able contemporary,* "that filial obedience is not the character of the age; and that not only sons but daughters have adopted something of that spirit of independence, and disdain of control, which characterize the times." To the discussion of *the right of man*, this evil is in a subsequent passage attributed. But with all due deference to such respectable authority, I think the evil complained of may fairly be traced to a more natural and a more obvious source. Children surrounded from the cradle with all that can stimulate pride and vanity, encouraged to entertain a conceit of their own consequence, and to look down with disdain on all who are in an inferior situation in life; their appetites pampered, their wills uncontrolled, their inclinations perverted, their desires inflamed, and their ideas of happiness associated with the gratification of their appetites and passions, cannot be expected to entertain notions of duty or obedience. In the passions and habits influenced by such circumstances, they will have more powerful incentives to the spirit of insubordination, than a respect for the rights of their fellow-creatures could possibly produce. These rights, which are derided by prejudice, despised by luxury, and trampled on by pride, must be ever held sa-

* Mrs. H. More.

cred by justice and humanity; nor can a sensibility to the feelings, and an interest in the happiness of the human race, prove in any instance inimical to virtue. The child of a West-Indian planter, whose mind has never been tinctured with a single prejudice in favour of the rights of man, who has been brought up in the school of despotism, and taught from infancy to consider the happiness of *the many* as a proper sacrifice to the avarice and luxury of *the few*, will not, I apprehend, be found to possess notions of filial obedience of a very exemplary kind. By impressing children with a proper sense of their own weakness, by inspiring them with gratitude and love towards all those from whom they receive assistance and protection, and by teaching them from infancy habits of submission to the dictates of superior age and wisdom, a foundation will certainly be laid for filial obedience, independent of any political creed; and if in the cultivation of the understanding, care be taken not to destroy what has been done for the cultivation of the heart, by an improper application of the stimulants of envy and vanity, we have reason to hope that the superstructure will be agreeable to our wishes.

Adieu.

LETTER IX.

ASSOCIATIONS DESTRUCTIVE OF BENEVOLENCE.

Pernicious effects of partiality.—Of ridicule.—Of contempt for the female character.

THE disposition to benevolence is sown and nourished in the grateful soil of family affection. Where children are educated upon sensible principles, so that their wills are not perpetually clashing with each other, mutual affection must naturally spring from sympathy in each other's joys, and the pleasure derived from each other's society. But this affection is too often nipped in the bud by the canker of parental partiality.

Children are so far conscious of their *rights*, as to feel that they have an equal claim to the parent's tenderness and affection. Where this claim is not allowed, and capricious fondness singles out some particular objects on which to lavish its regards, it never fails to produce the worst consequences both on the favoured and neglected parties. In the former it engenders pride and arrogance, in the latter it brings forth indignation and hatred; and destroys the sense of justice in both. It too often happens, that personal defects, or personal charms, occasion this unfortunate bias in a mother's mind. Sometimes that briskness which is so frequently mistaken for genius, or that slowness which is confounded with stupidity, becomes an excuse for partiality or dislike; and sometimes no excuse is

attempted, but the sensible one, that "it is a feeling which cannot be helped!"

Whatever may be the motive assigned for partiality to a favourite, or for dislike to an unfavoured child, the mother who indulges her feelings with regard to either, may be assured she is guilty of a crime of no light dye. She, in the first place, breaks the bonds of family affection, and sows the seeds of discord among her children, which, as they grow up, produce envy, jealousy, and a perpetual recurrence of strife. Home is thus made a scene of displacency, and discontent; than which nothing can be more inimical to the feelings of benevolence.

If the injury done to the rest of her offspring make a slight impression on the mother's heart, the injury done to the favourite by her ill-judged partiality is surely worthy her attention. Let the partial mother consider, that she is not only perverting the heart of her beloved darling, by the introduction of all the passions connected with pride and arrogance; but by rendering him an object of jealousy and envy, is begetting towards him the hatred and aversion of those to whom in after life he ought naturally to look for solace and support; that she may be the means of depriving his youth of the blessings of fraternal affection, and his old age of the consolations of fraternal sympathy.

Nor is it the affection and good-will of his own family alone of which she robs him. No one can regard a spoiled child but with feelings of dislike. The faults which good-nature would overlook, the blemishes which compassion would regard with tenderness, become odious and revolting, when seen in the object of blind and doating partiality. Can a mother compensate by her endearments for

thus depriving her child of the good-will of brothers, sisters, relations, and friends?

The child who finds itself the object of dislike to every one besides, will, it is true, be induced to cling to her to whom alone it perceives itself an object of affection; and this exclusive preference is so pleasing to self-love, that a weak mother is sufficiently gratified by the expression of it, without troubling herself to examine the principles from which it flows.

In families where connubial harmony has not survived the honey-moon; where mutual esteem and mutual complacency have given place to the little jealousies of prerogative, and the splenetic humours of contradiction; it is no uncommon thing to see the well-being and happiness of children sacrificed to the spirit of contention. I have lately heard of an instance in point, where two fine children have been the victims of this disunion of sentiment and affection. The boy, the mother's darling, has had his temper completely ruined by her indulgence; while his resentful passions are perpetually irritated, not subdued by the severity of the father. This severity is revenged in turn by the mother on the father's favourite; the poor little girl being always whipped by her, whenever the father has bestowed upon the boy a similar chastisement. What are the dispositions, what the sentiments, that must thus be inevitably inspired? The love towards the parent who indulges, must be unmingled with esteem, respect, or veneration, and associated merely with ideas of selfish gratification; while towards the other parent, the sense of injustice will operate to the production of sullen hatred and slavish fear. Thus pride and displacency, selfishness and malevolence, will be cherished in the

infant bosom; till an habitual tendency to all the passions and affections against which it is the peculiar duty of a parent to guard, will be fatally introduced, leading their victims to vice and misery.

The feelings of benevolence will neither be uniform nor extensive in their operation, unless they are supported by a strong sense of justice. For this end the necessity and propriety of practising the rule of "doing as they would be done by," ought to be early and forcibly inculcated on the minds of children; and as opportunities of inculcating it daily and hourly occur, they ought never to be passed in silence.

When a child has received pleasure from the complaisance of a companion, or been gratified by any act of kindness or generosity, an appeal ought instantly to be made to his feelings, and the duty of contributing in a similar manner to the happiness of others enforced at the moment when the mind is in a proper tone for the exercise of the sympathetic affections. When he has received any hurt or injury, instead of soothing his angry passions by taking part in his quarrel, the opportunity ought to be seized, for recalling to his mind the petty injuries he may have inflicted on a companion on some former occasion, and thus inspiring him with a regard for the feelings of others.

An early and deep-founded sense of justice is the proper soil wherein to nourish every moral virtue. Nor is it more essential towards the culture of the heart, than of the understanding. When we come to investigate the faculty of judgment, we shall have a fuller view of its important consequences. At present I shall only urge the necessity of paying a strict attention to those early habits and associa-

tions, by which the sense of justice is diminished or destroyed.

I have already endeavoured to point out the danger of permitting young persons to attach ideas of contempt to any person, on account of involuntary defects, peculiar manners, or peculiar sentiments. Wherever contempt is felt, it must be accompanied with a consciousness of superiority ; and if this consciousness of superiority be built on a bad foundation, pride and arrogance are the inevitable consequences.

What, then, shall we say for those parents, who encourage their children in a practice by which all the feelings of contempt, pride, and arrogance, are inspired and cherished ? You will here anticipate my mention of mimickry and ridicule, which is often applauded in children as a proof of wit, while in reality it is the worst of folly.

Ridicule is a sacred weapon, which ought never to be lightly wielded. When applied to as the means of exposing sophistry it is sanctioned by truth and justice ; though, even then, the person who dares to use it, ought to be assuredly purified from every sinister motive.

By children it can never be applied to any useful purpose ; while, from the particular light in which it places the object of it to their imaginations, the judgment is perverted, and the nice feelings of moral justice completely destroyed.

Children who are brought up at great schools, seldom, I believe, escape this vice. The under-teachers at such seminaries are, in general, considered as butts at which the darts of ridicule may be lawfully shot. Thus the infant wit is whetted by malignity ; the mind is corrupted, and rendered callous to every generous sentiment, while obstinacy

and self-conceit lead to all the errors of presumption.

Would we implant the sense of justice in the heart, we must vigilantly guard it against those prejudices which effectually check its growth, and prevent its ever coming to maturity. Of this nature, in my opinion, are those which originate in the early distinction that is made between the sexes, from which boys acquire ideas of an inherent superiority, grafted on pride, and supported by selfishness.

The foolish partiality which some mothers evince towards their male offspring, is sometimes such as would induce a spectator to think they have embraced the opinion vulgarly attributed to Mahommed, and have been taught to believe that men only have souls; and that the female children whom God has sent them, have been brought into the world for no other purpose than to contribute to the pleasure, and submit to the authority, of the lords of the creation. Were this, indeed, the case, it would still behove the tender mother to consider, that till the age when this decided and incontrovertible superiority in every natural endowment was unequivocally displayed, a boy might be taught to respect the feelings of the companion in the sister, without injury to his inherent dignity; and that the early sense of justice thus acquired would produce habits of urbanity highly favourable to his happiness, as well as to his virtue.

Christian mothers cannot for their partiality plead the same excuse that may be offered in favour of the Mahommedan. She who believes her daughters and her sons to be equally born heirs of immortality, equally favoured in the sight of the Most High, equally endowed with all that can exalt and enno-

ble human nature—the means of grace, and the hope of glory; she who considers eternal misery as the consequence of vice, and eternal happiness as the reward of virtue: cannot show the preference of superior regard and affection on account of sex, independently of mental qualification, without a manifest dereliction of religious principle. Yet so powerful are first impressions, so strongly rooted are the prejudices of our education, that not even religion itself, no, not in minds where it is deeply cherished, can prevail against them. These are the tares which the enemy has sown while we slept; and which will continue to grow up with the wheat till the great and general harvest. Alas! who can tell how many of the opinions we now so fondly cherish, may then be found in the number? "By far the greater part of the opinions on which we act in life, are not (says Stewart) the result of our own investigations; but are adopted implicitly in infancy and youth, upon the authority of others. When a child hears either a speculative absurdity, or an erroneous principle of action, recommended and enforced daily by the same voice which first conveyed to it those simple and sublime lessons of morality and religion, which are congenial to its nature, is it to be wondered at, that in future life it should find it so difficult to eradicate prejudices which have twined their roots with all the essential principles of the human frame." That a contempt of the female nature, and an overweening conceit of the essential superiority of that of the male, is of the number of these hereditary prejudices, will, I imagine, be no difficult matter to prove.

Though as it is a prejudice that has "twined its roots," not only with the essential principles, but

with the strongest passions of his nature, the hopes of eradicating it must be faint and remote.

The obstinacy of prejudices received from early association is commonly in proportion to the mixture of truth with error. Had nature, indeed, made no distinction in the mental endowments of the sexes, the prejudice alluded to would long since have yielded to conviction; but the distinction made by nature, which is merely such as to render each sex most fit and capable to fulfil the duties of its peculiar sphere, confers neither superiority on the one, nor degradation on the other. Of all that is truly worthy, of all that is truly estimable, in the sight of God and man, both sexes are capable alike. Excited to similar virtue by similar motives, exposed to similar temptations by similar passions and frailties, would it not be wise, if, instead of strengthening these passions by mutual jealousy concerning objects of comparatively small importance, they endeavoured to be mutually instrumental in the support of each other's virtue? This, I am convinced, would be much more commonly the case, were it not for the prevalence of that prejudice which teaches even boys to regard females with contempt, as beings of an inferior order.

All the prejudices which originate in early association, are for a time deemed obvious and incontrovertible truths, discovered by the light of nature. Thus, while the West-Indian planter judges the jetty skin of the negro a mark of inferiority inscribed by the hand of the Great Creator, to point out the immensity of the distance between him and his sable brethren; the African, seated under the bentang tree of his native village, and listening to the tale of the stranger, regards the white skin of the European with disgust and horror, as the signet

of nature stampt with the character of cruelty and cunning. Thus too does man, in every nation, and in every stage of society, from the associations of his infancy attach to the weakness arising from the more delicate structure of the female frame, ideas of contempt and inferiority.

In order to analyze the prejudice, it is necessary to trace it to its source, that is to say, to the *savage state* in which it evidently originated; for in the savage state bodily strength gives an indisputable title to superiority. Man is, in this state, distinguished from the brute chiefly by the possession of improveable faculties; but this is a latent treasure, of which he is long insensible; and while undiscovered, he is, in some respects, beneath his brothers of the field. The lion brings not his weaker mate into a state of slavish subjection, but, inspired by instinct, lays at her feet the spoils his strength and courage have procured; while the savage, his inferior in all but pride and cruelty, treats the miserable partner of his hut with contumelious disdain and rigorous oppression. The poor female, subdued by habitual wretchedness to habitual submission, acquiesces in her miserable destiny; and while she teaches her daughters to submit with cheerfulness to the doom of slavery, she inspires her sons with savage notions of their own comparative importance, and glories in the first indications of their haughtiness and ferocity; dispositions with which she associates the ideas of strength and valour, which comprise all that is in her view great and honourable.

As society advances in its progress towards civilization, the mental powers begin to rise into importance; but the associations of contempt, which the inferiority, with regard to physical strength, had

originally generated, continue to operate, and debar females from those opportunities of improvement which gradually open on the other sex. Thus, we still find in many nations of Asia, where society is advanced to a considerable degree of refinement, this refinement entirely confined to the men; the women being still destined to all the miseries of ignorance and slavery. Thus throughout the world, while man advanced in knowledge and science, from merely physical to rational life, women were doomed to remain stationary; till the distance between the sexes was deemed as great with regard to mental endowments in the civilized state, as it had been with respect to personal strength in the savage.

A lively picture is given by the Eastern writers, of the consequences of this continued degradation of the female character. It is, however, worthy of remark, that the vices of which they uniformly accuse women, are the vices of slaves; and that while innate depravity is by them constantly attributed to the sex, the cause of this depravity is never once hinted at, though it must be sufficiently obvious to every unprejudiced mind.

A more enlightened policy than was ever known to Oriental wisdom, elevated the European nations of antiquity to nobler sentiments and more enlarged views; but so deeply rooted are the prejudices of early association, nourished by habit, and strengthened by the pride of power, that neither legislator, philosopher, priest, or poet, appears to have been superior to their control. The prejudices of the savage state, with regard to women, continued to operate on the enlightened sages of the Grecian and Roman world; though, in the intercourse of social life, the minds of the females of Greece and Rome

acquired a degree of improvement which elevated their sentiments to high notions of honour and virtue. But the improvement was casual, the effect transient. The virtue that is merely the effect of imitation, cannot be expected to survive its model. Never taught to consider themselves as having an inherent interest in the cultivation of their faculties, they learned to value their virtues and accomplishments, not as intrinsically their own, but as shedding a lustre on the house from which they sprung, or on that to which they were allied. Virtues built on such a shallow foundation might be brilliant, but could not be comprehensive or durable. It was, however, the only foundation which the pride of man, in the most advanced state of human knowledge, allowed for female virtue; nor did it ever enter into the heart of the most philanthropic sage, to place it on the same foundation as his own.

That to which human philanthropy and human wisdom were unequal, was accomplished by Divine.

Were there no other proofs of the superiority of our blessed Saviour to the wisest of the sons of men, his superiority to all the prejudices of his age, and country, and sex, and situation, would, I think, be sufficient to prove him more than human.

By making the purification of the heart, and the subjugation of the passions, alike the duty of all, he broke down the barrier that pride and prejudice had placed between the sexes. He elevated the weaker, not by the pride of intellect, but by the dignity of virtue. He changed the associations of honour and esteem from the *nature of the duty* to its due performance; and promised eternal life as the reward, not of great talents or elegant accomplish-

ments, not of valour, or of renown, or of worldly wisdom, but of a pure faith, producing a pure heart and undefiled conscience.

So far did this doctrine operate, that wherever it was embraced, it procured for women, as heirs of immortality, a degree of respect to which the philosophy of Greece and Rome had never elevated them.

But the doctrine of Christ was embraced nominally by millions, who remained strangers to the spirit of its precepts. It was made to bend to human passions and human prejudices, with which it was so blended, as to become distorted and disgraced. The instructions which our Saviour and his Apostles addressed indiscriminately to the poor and to the rich, to the learned and the ignorant, to *men* and to *women*, were supposed, in process of time, to be incomprehensible to all but the priesthood, who arrogated to itself the privilege of explaining them. The explanations being generally tinctured by prejudice, and not unfrequently by prejudices of the impurest sort, originating in the selfish passions, were opposed, contested, censured ; till the passions were inflamed into resentment, and both parties became infinitely more zealous for the establishment of their own particular explanations, than for the diffusion of the spirit of the Gospel. Had that spirit continued to preserve its influence on the human heart, great is the alteration which would have undoubtedly been produced on human character. But instead of subduing the passions that opposed it, these passions were enlisted in support of what was called by its name. Prejudices, which the example and doctrines of our Divine Master would have completely overthrown, became thus in a manner sanctified by their alliance with

superstition; and selfishness continued to justify injustice. That the prejudices of the savage state should continue to prevail in the ages of barbarism, when the light shed by the Christian dispensation was veiled in impenetrable darkness, is not surprising; but that these prejudices should continue to prevail after this veil was removed, appears a little extraordinary, though the cause may easily be ascertained.

When the light of science began to illumine our long benighted hemisphere, and the art of printing diffused those treasures of knowledge which had been an useless deposit in the hands of ignorance and superstition, an enthusiastic admiration of the writings of the ancients was generally inspired. Devoted to the study of heathen wisdom, men forgot, or lightly esteemed, the fountain of truth; they beheld it agitated by theological controversy, and polluted by theological prejudice, and turned from it with disgust; not permitting themselves to examine whether a stream so polluted could have its source in Divine perfection. The consequence has long been, still is, and may long continue, fatal to the cause of sound morality and virtue.

However the study of the classics may have opened the understanding, enlarged the views, and elevated the sentiments, of men; it is to be feared, that many prejudices have flowed from the same source, that are inconsistent with, and inimical to the spirit of the religion we profess; prejudices which are at variance with the whole tenor of our Saviour's precepts, and which occasion a perpetual and manifest inconsistency between the practice and profession of Christians. These prejudices have thrown a shade of ignominy over the mild glories

of humility, meekness, and mercy, and exalted pride and revenge into the rank of virtues. They have substituted the love of glory for the love of truth, emblazoned the crimes of ambition with the lustre of renown, and taught man to prefer the applause of a giddy multitude to the approbation of his God. By introducing false associations of regard and preference with adventitious circumstances, altogether foreign to the moral character, as learning, strength, valour, power, &c. they have destroyed the just criterion of human worth, and given to *situation*, (which marks the nature of the duty to be performed,) that respect which is morally due to the *just performance of duty*. These prejudices have all an evident tendency to continue and perpetuate the ideas of sexual superiority, which would infallibly have been destroyed by the pure morality of the Gospel. They have gratified the pride of man at the expense of his virtue.

With a contempt for the female sex, on account of this fancied inferiority, has been associated a contempt for those moral qualities which are allowed to constitute the perfection of the female character. Meekness, gentleness, temperance, and chastity; that command over the passions which is obtained by frequent self-denial; and that willingness to sacrifice every selfish wish, and every selfish feeling, to the happiness of others, which is the consequence of subdued self-will, and the cultivation of the social and benevolent affections; are considered as feminine virtues, derogatory to the dignity of the manly character. Nay, further: by this unfortunate association has religion itself come into disgrace; devotional sentiment is considered as a mere adjunct of female virtue, suitable to the weakness of the female mind, *and for that reason*

disgraceful to the superior wisdom of man. At the thought of *judgment to come*, women, like Felix, may learn to tremble; and, in order to avert the consequences of Divine displeasure, may study the practice of that righteousness and temperance recommended by the Apostle to his royal auditor: But while the Christian graces are associated with that contempt which the idea of inferiority inspires, neither righteousness, nor temperance, nor judgment to come, will be considered as worthy of consideration in the mind of man.

This unhappy prejudice is in some respects far less injurious to the female than to the male. The obedience which they are taught to pay to authority, the submission with which they are made to bow to arrogance and injustice, produce habits of self-denial favourable to disinterestedness, meekness, humility and generosity; dispositions which are allied to every species of moral excellence. And so seldom do these amiable dispositions fail to be produced by the subjugation of self-will, in females who have been properly educated, that in combating the prejudice which throws contempt upon the female character, I shall be found to plead the cause of the other sex rather than of my own. Every prejudice founded in selfishness and injustice inevitably corrupts the mind, and every act of tyranny resulting from it debases the human character: but submission "for conscience sake," even to the highest degree of tyranny and injustice, is an act, not of meanness, but of magnanimity. Instead of murmuring at the circumstances under which they are placed, women ought early to be taught to turn those very circumstances to their advantage, by rendering them conducive to the cultivation of all the milder virtues. And this they would not fail

to do, unless they were made to participate in those prejudices which I have humbly attempted to explain, and to expose. (G)

By far the greater part of those who have hitherto taken upon them to stand forth as champions for sexual equality, have done it upon grounds that to me appear indefensible, if not absurd. It is not an equality of moral worth for which they contend, and which is the only true object of regard, nor for an equality of rights with respect to the Divine favour, which alone elevates the human character into dignity and importance; but for an equality of employments and avocations, founded upon the erroneous idea of a perfect similarity of powers. Infected by the prejudices which associate ideas of honour and esteem with knowledge and science, independent of moral virtue, and envious of the short-lived glories of ambition, they desire for their sex an admission into the theatre of public life, and wish to qualify them for it by an education in every respect similar to that of men. Men scoff at their pretences, and hold their presumption in abhorrence; but men do not consider, that these pretences, and that presumption, have been caught from the false notions of importance which they have themselves affixed to their own peculiar avocations. Taught from earliest infancy to arrogate to themselves a claim of inherent superiority, this idea attaches itself to all the studies and pursuits which custom has exclusively assigned them. These prejudices operating likewise on the minds of women, it is not surprising that those who perceive in themselves a capacity for attaining as high a degree of intellectual eminence, should aspire to be sharers in those honours which they have been taught, by the pride of men, to regard as supreme

distinction. Were both sexes guarded from the admission of early prejudice, and taught to value themselves on no superiority but that of virtue, these vain and idle jealousies would cease; man would become more worthy, and woman more respectable. Were these prejudices annihilated, the virtues of temperance and chastity would not in the mind of man be associated with ideas of contempt, as merely proper to be observed by the inferior part of the species; nor would habits of licentiousness be considered as a light and venial evil, but regarded with the same horror which is happily still attached to female depravity.

Of the licentiousness of one sex, however, the depravity of the other is the natural and certain consequence. Accustomed to acquiesce in the idea of man's superiority in all wisdom and perfection, women cease to respect those laws of decency and reserve, which they perceive it the glory of the other sex to set at defiance. They learn to consider the restrictions of chastity as the fetters of worldly prudence; and as those to whom they are accustomed to look up as beings of a superior order, scoff at that religion which teaches purity of heart as well as manners, they likewise learn to regard it with contempt. The *believing wife* is from the prejudices of early association, considered as too much inferior, in point of intellect and intelligence, to have any chance of converting the *unbelieving husband;* while a thousand to one are in favour of the unbelieving husband's perverting the believing wife!

If such are the consequences of sexual prejudice, it behoves every parent who is anxious for the temporal and eternal happiness of the beings entrusted

to her care, to guard against its introduction into the infant mind. For this end, she must carefully and conscientiously maintain a strict impartiality in the distribution of favour and affection. There must be no separate rules of discipline ; no system of individual and partial indulgence, nor partial restriction, nor partial exemption ; but one law of propriety, decency, modesty, and simplicity ; one rule of humble submission and cheerful obedience. Boys and girls must equally be made to perceive that there is but one path to approbation and esteem, *the path of duty ;* and made to feel that they are approved of and esteemed on no other principle.

I can see no good reason why, in early life, their tasks and instructions should not be the same. Is it because the superior portion of reason supposed to be inherent in man, is so very evidently equal to the government of his passions, that we think we may safely neglect in infancy the culture of his heart ? Or has the instinctive faculty of imitation proved so efficient a guide to the other sex ; has it always so certainly led to the performance of the important duties assigned to females in civilized society, as to justify us in withholding from them the advantages of mental cultivation ? Such seems to have been the opinions on which the common practice has been founded. But before we implicitly adopt them, it is surely proper to ascertain, whether they have originated in prejudice, or have been justified by long and ample experience.

The pride and arrogance which boys acquire from early ideas of inherent superiority, is greatly increased by the premature distinction that is made between their pursuits and avocations, and those of girls. The trifling accomplishments to which the girls are devoted, they despise as irrational ; while

consciousness of the superior dignity of that species of knowledge into which they are early initiated, augments their supercilious disdain, and increases the idea of the distance that is placed between them. They soon cease to tolerate them as companions, but regard them as incumbrances at once troublesome and despicable.

In men of little minds this early acquired contempt for the female character takes deep and lasting root. It is an everlasting source of consolation to their pride, and a happy excuse for the exercise of a selfish tyranny over the unfortunate females of their families. Where the mind is enlightened and the heart is generous, this early prejudice will cease to operate ; but its strength is not always in proportion to the weakness of the character. To what but to this early prejudice, can we ascribe the conduct of some men of sense, in the most important concern of life ? Having never experienced any pleasure in female society but through the medium of passion, by passion only are they guided in the choice of a connexion sacred and indissoluble. Passion is short-lived ; but when passion is no more, a sense of common interest, habit, and necessity, happily unite their forces to keep off wretchedness. Without their powerful aid, how miserably must existence drag on in the society of a person with whom there is no intercourse of intellect, no interchange of sentiment, no similarity of taste, no common object of pursuit, no common subject of conversation ! To be tied to one week of such society would be misery. What then, shall we say to those who voluntarily tie themselves to it for life ? To the children of such marriages the contempt for the female character is inevitable. It is with them an hereditary sentiment, confirmed by

the father's conduct, and the mother's folly. In such families, it may easily be supposed, that a distinction will soon be made between the boys and girls; a distinction, which, if it proves injurious to the male, is no less fatal to the female mind.

By the early associations above described as inimical to manly virtue, girls learn to place the virtues recommended to their practice on an improper basis; not founded on immutable truth, but on worldly notions of prudence and propriety. It is in reality manners, not morals, which they thus acquire. Opinion is their rule of life, their law of virtue; and fashion, their only test of propriety. Hence we behold decency outraged in the dress and behaviour of women, who assume the appellation of virtuous! We behold modesty depending on the caprice of fashion; and by the ease with which it is plucked up by the roots at her decree, we may judge of the lightness of the soil in which it was planted.

By these early associations which render opinion the test of truth, the female mind is so much perverted, as to render it in some degree dangerous for us to rise above the prejudices of education. For want of proper notions of the immutability of moral truth, females who have had sufficient strength of mind to emancipate themselves from the dominion of opinion, have sometimes been seen to despise the virtues they had in early life learned to associate with it, and to pique themselves on a dereliction of the peculiar duties of their sex and station. From these examples plausible arguments have been formed against the cultivation of the female mind. But a more enlarged view of the subject would afford different conclusions. If, by

a defective education, opinion has been made the only rule of virtue; whenever a deference for opinion is got the better of, so as no longer to operate on the mind, the notions of virtue attached to it must of course be annihilated. Where a judicious care has been exercised in the cultivation of the moral and intellectual faculties in early life, the respect for virtue is placed on a more permanent foundation. The female who is taught an early and habitual respect to the laws of God and conscience, will never learn to despise the duties of her sex and situation. And she whose primary desire is to approve herself to these, may cultivate her reason with safety; for never will it lead her astray from the path of duty.

By the early distinction that is made between the sexes, the idea of a distinct and separate code of morality is inevitably inspired; and if the consequences of this idea be such as I have represented them, it surely behoves parents to consider how the evil may be avoided. Let them examine, whether the early separation which now takes place under the sanction of fashion, assuming the name of delicacy, be absolutely necessary; and whether the artificial manners which are prescribed to girls from the cradle, be a real advantage of such vast importance to their future well-being, as to be an equivalent for sense and virtue. Far am I from considering the preservation of female delicacy as a matter of slight importance; but it is in the purity of the heart, and not in deference to public opinion, that I would fix its basis. To guard the purity of the heart from spot or blemish is, in a private family, brought up under the eye of a judicious

parent, no difficult task.* But the purity that depends solely on innocent ignorance, is liable to be soiled on the slightest exposure. It may be contaminated by chance, and receive a lasting stain through the medium of a natural curiosity. It is not by mere ignorance of evil, that genuine delicacy can be inspired. If pains be not taken, at an early period of life, firmly to associate the ideas of personal delicacy and personal decency with the ideas of propriety and virtue, and to attach ideas of shame and remorse to the smallest breach of the laws of decorum, our pupils may remain personally unpolluted from principle, but they will have little chance of being numbered with the "pure in heart."

It is, I am well convinced, only by attaching ideas of disgust and abhorrence to every sentiment, every circumstance, and every idea, which can tend to soil the purity of the imagination, that we can hope to inspire that species of delicacy which, like the beautiful armour which nature has bestowed upon some plants and flowers, is at once a guard and ornament. Let it be firmly fixed in the mind, by the methods I have mentioned, let it be strengthened by frequent communication with the Author of all purity and all perfection, and we need entertain no apprehension that it will be injured by learning, or contaminated by science. Often, I fear, is this delicacy a stranger to the hearts of those who nevertheless assume its appearance. But where it is only assumed, it will, like other parts of dress,

* There is no point in which the conduct of servants towards children ought to be more severely scrutinized, than in that to which I now allude; for in none do I believe it more generally reprehensible. Would we have delicacy fixed in the heart, infancy itself must be treated with decency and respect.

obey the decrees of fashion, and be reserved for particular occasions ; whereas the sensibility arising from unsoiled purity is seen

> "In all the thousand decencies that flow
> From every word and action."

The delicacy that is produced by association, and confirmed by religious principle, will be found as superior to the spurious sort born of affectation and sentiment, (which is often only another word for affectation) as reality is to fiction. The former is unalterable and undeviating, while the latter is ever liable to be contaminated by the contagion of example, and to vary with situation and circumstances.

Modesty has been, with much truth and propriety, represented as the first ornament of the female mind : but it may be questioned, whether both sexes have not been injured by considering it as a *sexual* virtue. Why should not boys be inspired with the feelings of delicacy as well as girls? Why should the early corruption of their imagination be deemed a matter of light importance ? What do we gain by attaching ideas of manliness and spirit to depravity of heart and manners ? Alas, many and fatal are the errors which may be traced to this unfortunate association ! Let it be the endeavour of my friend to guard her sons from its pernicious effects ; and may they in their future lives evince, that dignity of conduct, elevation of sentiment, and refinement of taste, are connected with modesty, purity, and virtue !

Adieu.

LETTER X.

ASSOCIATIONS PRODUCTIVE OF SELFISHNESS.

Wisdom of self-denial.—Danger of associating the ideas of happiness with sensual gratification.—Effects of an early indulgence of the palate.—Illustrations.

The more accurately we examine the Divine system of morals which we propose to adopt as our rule and guide in education, the more shall we admire that knowledge of the human heart on which it is founded. There nothing clashes, nothing is at variance. Each precept harmonizes so as to form a perfect unity. In order to produce the benevolence it inculcates, it teaches that the selfish passions must of necessity be subdued ; and in order to obtain that ascendancy over them which is absolutely necessary for the preservation of virtue, it recommends the wholesome discipline of self-denial.

To those who have from infancy been accustomed to the gratification of self-will, this doctrine of self-denial appears harsh and intolerable ; it is, therefore, either glossed over and explained away, or commuted into an observance of times and ceremonies, with occasional periods of restraint and abstinence. Pride, licentiousness, and self-partiality, have been fruitful in expedients to elude the *spirit* of the precept, and to cheat the conscience by a pretended obedience to the *letter ;* but if the golden rule of *doing as we would be done by*, be allowed as the criterion of our due fulfilment of the

social duties, the necessity of self-denial will appear evident; for never can we do by others as we would have them do by us, until we have learned to restrain the passions and desires which terminate in *self*.

If we would enable our pupils to attain such a control over the selfish passions, as is absolutely necessary for the practical exercise of piety, justice, and benevolence; we must begin betimes to inure them to the practice of self-denial, which is the only soil in which those virtues can ever flourish.

Why do we so often see the professors of piety void of charity and mercy? Why do we behold the compassionate feelings of exquisite sensibility evaporate in sentiment; and minds, deaf to the calls of justice, boasting acts of capricious and spontaneous generosity? Why, but because they act from the impulse of self-will, and are totally incapable of that self-denial, without which, to be truly generous, truly beneficent, or truly just, is impossible.

To give the intellectual part of our nature a command over the sensual, ought surely to constitute a primary object in education; for according as the one or the other prevails, will the character be formed to vice or virtue: And yet we generally act towards children in the first years of infancy, as if the sensual part of their nature were the only objects of our concern!

We seem to consider the pampering of the appetite as the surest mark of affection; and endeavour to rouse and stimulate it, by every means in our power, as a proof of kindness and regard!

Fatal are the consequences which result from this mistaken conduct, by which every idea of pleasure becomes inseparably associated with the

gratification of the sensual appetites. Hence proceeds the early licentiousness of youth, the uncontrollableness of desire, and that degrading habit of self-indulgence, which is inimical to the cultivation of every social and every patriotic virtue.

It is in education, as St. James has pronounced it with regard to pure religion, "Whosoever is guilty in one point is guilty of all." In vain shall the utmost pains be taken to inspire benevolence and public spirit, if, at the same time, the selfishness necessarily consequent on the indulgence of sensual appetites be promoted and encouraged. Parents too often think, that because children lose their taste for the good things with which they have been pampered, the appetites may in infancy be indulged with impunity. But upon reflection it must surely appear evident, that if, by this early and habitual indulgence of the sensual pleasures of the palate, the idea of happiness becomes associated with the idea of selfish and sensual gratification, the association may continue to operate long after the taste for sweet cakes and sugar plumbs has been changed to other objects. The man who has been all his life unaccustomed to self-denial, has little chance of escaping the snares of temptation. Should he even avoid the grosser and more scandalous vices, the spirit of selfishness may still, though turned to a less obnoxious channel, be equally obvious, and almost equally detrimental to the happiness of others.

Wherever, from early indulgence, an over regard for personal ease and personal gratification has been implanted in the mind, selfishness will be the predominant feature in the character. Do we not daily see men of this description demanding those sacrifices from which they themselves would

shrink? Like the Pharisees of old, "they make burthens, grievous to be borne, and lay on others what they would not so much as touch with one of their fingers." They consider every thing from others as a right, but never make a concession to the feelings or inclinations of any individual as a duty. This spirit of selfishness it is, which makes the misery of domestic life. The woman who is actuated by it, is incapable of blending every idea of her own happiness and interest with the interest and happiness of her husband. Her narrow views centre all in *self*, and her little soul is incessantly employed in little mean manœuvres for the accomplishment of little selfish purposes. The man who, by early education, has contracted similar habits of selfishness, employs other means to accomplish ends equally despicable. Does he appear fond of his wife and children? Inquire what gratification he will forego in order to promote their happiness. Observe what respect he pays to their feelings and inclinations. He indulges his children in infancy, because he then finds pleasure in indulging them, and has never been accustomed to sacrifice present inclination to the real well-being of others; but when his children cease to amuse, the indulgent father is transformed into the cruel tyrant. The darling wife is in reality a bosom slave: a being who is required to have neither will nor feelings, nor inclination of her own; but who is to bow with implicit submission to the sovereign will of her despotic lord; and who is expected to consider herself happy, because he, to whom she has made herself a necessary and useful domestic, deigns graciously to receive her services, and to provide for her support.

Such, where selfishness predominates, is the picture of domestic felicity! By early habits of self-

denial, how might the prospect be changed, how might the colours be brightened! The selfish affections would then be absorbed in the social, and the power of contributing to the happiness of the beloved objects of tenderness, would furnish a perpetual source of complacency and delight.

"Sure," cries some fond mother, "it is nonsense to expect self-denial from a child! The pretty dears are *so* fond of good things, and it is *so* natural they should be fond of them, that it would be the height of cruelty to refuse making them happy."

And are we so very sure that we actually do promote their happiness, by the gratification of those fictitious appetites? For that they are in a great measure fictitious, observation will testify. The extreme delicacy of the organs in infancy renders the food which appears insipid to adults, agreeable to the infant taste; and were this order of nature attended to, it would point out a simple regimen, as the most proper and the most pleasant. Instead of attending to nature in this particular, we judge of the child's taste by our own; and in the plenitude of our tenderness, or, more properly speaking, of our *folly*, we present it with whatever to our vitiated palates appears most inviting:* and thus do we teach our children prematurely to lose all relish for that simple food, which nature has rendered sweet and palatable. The fictitious taste thus excited, is still farther stimulated by the encomiums we bestow on such articles as are not in-

* A nobleman, who was one of the most celebrated *bon vivans* of his age, expressed, as I have been told, the greatest regret at his son's dislike to claret. Every means were used, before the boy attained his tenth year, to conquer this unfortunate aversion. At length the father succeeded to his wish; and so effectually was the fictitious taste implanted, that, at the age of twenty-five, the young man died a martyr to drinking.

tended for nourishment, but for the gratification of the palate. These are held out as the reward for good behaviour. They are constantly given as proofs of our kindness, and considered as the surest token of our affection. It is no wonder that the agreeable ideas with which they are thus associated enhance their value, and increase the desire for them, till every idea of enjoyment is connected with the idea of guzzling.

The more powerfully the desire of sensual gratification has been excited, the more severe will be the pain inflicted by every instance of self-denial; and as human nature is averse to suffering, we cannot expect that, where the pain of self-denial is great, it will be voluntarily submitted to, or patiently endured. By stimulating the appetite, we increase the pain of self-denial to this pitch, and render disappointment insupportable. When a child has learned to attach ideas of happiness to eating of every dainty that he sees, he must attach ideas of misery to forbearance. To tantalize him with the sight of any good things which he is forbidden to taste, is then cruelty, and cannot fail to excite in his bosom the feelings of resentment and discontent. But where the imagination has not been thus inflamed, where the idea of extraordinary gratification has never been connected with the idea of eating niceties, hunger will be satisfied with plain food in the midst of rarities, and a child will have no more desire to cloy his stomach with pastry than to corrode it by spirituous liquors.

The happy effects of the simplicity I now recommend, I have myself been witness of, in the only son of a family in which I have been interested by all the ties of friendship and affection. From

three years of age, this young gentleman sat constantly at a table where two courses and a dessert were regularly served; but never did he think of asking to taste but of one single dish. As he grew up, the restriction was taken off; but from never having had his appetite stimulated by false associations, he preserved his taste for simplicity uncorrupted; and instead of enjoying the luxuries of the table with the selfish and sordid pleasure of an epicure, he ate to satisfy the calls of hunger whetted by health and exercise, and enjoyed the banquet as the medium of sociality. How many of the amiable dispositions that have since marked his character, might have been for ever lost by the gross indulgence of the infant palate, it is impossible to pronounce. Perhaps, the dutiful and affectionate son might (this single circumstance giving a stimulus to self-will) have been, like many of his contemporaries, head strong and disobedient. And as one vice leads to another, it is not improbable, but that beginning in the career of appetite he might have sunk into the depths of vice, and have been at this moment numbered among the young men of fashion, whose manners are the disgrace of civilized society.

And what was the value of the gratifications of which he was deprived? Was he the less happy for having preserved his relish for plain and simple viands, amidst all the variety that luxury could furnish? No: the happy vivacity of childhood is in itself a pleasure superior to the joys of the glutton; and this vivacity is rather checked than promoted by greediness.

Observe the conduct of a spoiled child, when permitted to sit at a table spread with variety; see its greedy eye wandering from dish to dish, eager

to taste of all, and unsatisfied with every thing it tastes. To the meat that is put upon its plate, the fish seems preferable: the meat is then sent off, and the fish supplies its place: still the pouting lip proclaims dissatisfaction.

"It wants sauce!"

'Sauce, my love, is not good for children.'

"But I must have it! I must have sauce!" is the imperious answer.

'Well, don't cry, love, and you shall have it, if you are good; good children, you know, deserve to have what they like, when they ask it prettily.'

The sauce is given; but still dissatisfaction prevails. The pye, the pudding, the tart, the cheesecake, and all the long *et cetera* of dainties, are each in turn the object of desire, of intreaty; till surfeited to loathing, with a stomach gorged, but not satisfied, the young gentleman is dismissed, to exercise in another scene the blessed tempers engendered by this unlimited indulgence. And perhaps after all this, the parents may gravely lecture him on the sin of selfishness, and the virtue of self-denial.

I may, perhaps, by superficial readers, be charged with inconsistency, in first recommending self-denial as a virtue, and then enforcing the prevention of those desires, which it is the business of self-denial to control. To such objectors I would answer, that in the education of the heart our attention ought chiefly to be directed to those associations, which by exciting desire or aversion to improper objects, may render the practice of virtue in after-life not only difficult but impossible. Self-denial is a virtue essential to the practice of active benevolence. If by the obstacles which we throw in its way in early life, we increase the

pain attending its exertion to an intolerable degree, we need not expect that self-denial will be ever practised. In the mind which attaches the idea of happiness to the idea of any gratification that is merely selfish, self-love must become the sole spring of action. The recurrence of this gratification being much more frequent than the pleasures arising from the exercise of disinterested benevolence and the social affections; an inclination to the latter will be absorbed by the former, or at best be secondary to it. Accordingly it is observed by Cogan, that "it is a maxim with some in modern days, *never to ask a favour of an epicure till after his meals.*" How degrading to the character of him who is by nature "a little lower than the Angels!"

Nor is the effect upon the temper to be omitted in speaking of this common, though fatal, error in the management of children. "The food which recruits the exhausted powers of animal nature," says the same sensible author, "*exhilarates and invigorates the mind;* the *excess* which burdens the body, *benumbs the powers of the soul.* Whatever produces an uneasy sensation in the corporeal system, is apt to render the mind peevish and fretful, and dispose it to be much more affected than usual by incidents of a disagreeable nature. Again; those things which heat and irritate to a considerable degree, foster all turbulent and irritable passions. The painful and comfortless sensations produced by flatulences and indigestions in hypocondriac temperaments have sometimes produced, and sometimes been mistaken for, an anxious state of mind; and the medicines which relieve the one, will administer comfort to the other."*

* Cogan on the passions.

Who can read the above statement, and not bow with reverence to the divine wisdom which enjoined self-denial as a duty no less necessary to happiness than to virtue! In vain doth an intellectual being seek for felicity in the enjoyments of a brute. In these the brute will still be his superior, no epicure perhaps enjoying the pleasures of a first-rate feast with the same zest that his well-fed pig guttles the washings of his dishes.

> "Is joy the daughter of severity?
> It is.—Yet far my doctrine from severe."*

They are the unkind, they the cruel, who would first inflame the passions by early indulgence, and then weakly endeavour to diminish their influence by chastisement. I, on the contrary, would direct my utmost vigilance to prevent the rise and growth of the ungrateful and malevolent passions, and by this means supersede the necessity of correction and punishment. They act like the unwise and improvident legislators, whose regulations tend to corrupt the morals of a people, while their laws of punishment are written in blood. I would follow the example of those rulers, (if such there were) who made it their endeavour to *prevent crimes*, rather than their business to punish them.

"*All children are gluttons*," says Rousseau, who was himself a glutton, most likely from mismanagement in infancy; and children brought up on his plan of indulged self-will may be expected to remain the slaves of appetite through life. Rousseau speaks from his experience: permit me to speak from mine, in contradiction of his assertion. Of the companions of my infancy I remember but

* Young.

one or two, who would not have disdained the idea of being fond of the indulgence of the palate, which they were taught to consider as mean and degrading. The consequence of this association was, that the pocket-money, which, where another plan of early education prevails, is spent in gormandizing, and thus becomes the instrument of selfishness and sensuality, was often spent by them in charity, and thereby rendered instrumental to the cultivation of habits of benevolence. I know those who from five years of age had a liberal supply of pocket-money, and on looking back through all the intervening period, can aver, that they never laid out one farthing in the purchase of fruit, cake, or sweetmeat, for their own eating; but who with infinite pleasure can dwell on their little acts of infant charity, when the pure heart first felt the glow of sympathy, and rejoiced in conscious beneficence! (H)

Who will assert that these feelings do not give a higher relish to existence than the selfish pleasure of guzzling can bestow? And yet, by the pains taken to render eating the prime object of enjoyment, one should imagine that the happiness it confers was deemed paramount and supreme.

Nor is it the pleasures of the palate alone to which a human being ought to be made superior. Many are the evils arising from ill-judging tenderness, which, from an anxiety to avert all present suffering, lays up woes innumerable as the portion of futurity.

By the great attention that is paid to their accommodation in every trifling particular, children learn to attach an idea of importance to every personal indulgence, and consider ease, and freedom from pain, as their birth-right. They are thus enfeebled by luxury from the very cradle; and render-

ed totally unable to cope with those hardships and difficulties, which they may have to encounter in after-life. Should neither hardships nor difficulties be their lot, the evil will be still more serious; for the dispositions and habits of mind engendered by this attention to personal indulgence will then have nothing to counteract them, and complete selfishness must be the consequence.

Would we seriously consider and weigh the difficulty of changing associations that are early and strongly fixed in the mind, we should be less sanguine concerning the effects of that part of education on which our hopes and expectations are chiefly placed. Small is the influence which the lessons received from books have upon the passions and affections of the heart, where these have not been predisposed to the impression.

In vain, to a child brought up in the lap of luxury and indulgence, will you point out the virtues of an ancient hero, in the fond hope of inspiring esteem and emulation. Do you in reality admire the virtues you recommend to his imitation? Reflect how they were acquired. That it was in the school of simplicity and rigid discipline; that the greatest men who adorn the page of history, were taught to attain an ascendancy over the selfish passions, by the early habits of obedience and self-denial. Had their early ideas of happiness been associated with the idea of self-indulgence, Fabricius would have bartered his honour for gold, and Cato been the enslaver of his country.

Parents who are devoted to pleasure, must be contented to have their children run the same course; for if the imagination be once inflamed with an idea of the happiness resulting from these

gratifications, they will inevitably become the prime objects of pursuit.

A mother who is fond of dress and company, whose aim is to attract attention, and whose ambition is to outshine her friends and neighbours in the splendour of her furniture and equipage, may, if she pleases, teach her children to repeat the catechism, and employ a spare hour on a sunday evening to instruct them in what their godfathers and godmothers promised for them in baptism; but what can she expect as the result? What can her children think of the pomps and vanities of the world, which they are taught glibly to say they will renounce? Are they not taught by her example, more powerful than precept, that these very pomps and vanities are the prime, the only end of existence? And will this association be changed by running over the words of a catechism? No. Such lessons will be to them as tinkling brass and sounding cymbal; they may play upon the ear, but will never sink into the heart.

Upon the heart the uniform tenor of precept and example wrought into habit, and confirmed into principle, can alone be expected to make an effectual and permanent impression. All the experience of mankind goes to confirm this truth; and yet with all the experience of mankind before our eyes, we cherish the idea of effecting wonders, by giving our children lessons of virtue, and storing their memories with facts and theories. Let us look into the instructive page of history, and be convinced of the sandy foundation on which we build our hopes. Why, in the decline of the Roman empire, does every noble, every generous sentiment, seem to have been extinguished? Instead of the martial and gallant spirit of their virtuous ancestors, why do we

behold nought but one black catalogue of crimes and vices; cruelty and cowardice, linked to luxury and pride; perfidy and ingratitude, joined to superstition and sloth? Was it because there were no schools in the city of Constantine? Because in the Western empire the youth were without instruction? No. The sages and orators of ancient Greece and Rome still spoke to their degenerate sons. Their precepts were familiar to the ears of the preceptor and the pupil. The seed remained, but the soil was lost. The associations of honour and esteem were changed. The luxury and indulgence to which they were accustomed from the cradle, rendered luxury and indulgence the primary objects of desire. The ideas of glory, honour, and renown, which, in former ages, had been connected with the virtues of the patriot and the hero, were now attached to the splendour of dress, the smiles of the Prince, and the admiration of the populace.

The character must ever rise or fall, in exact proportion to the object of ambition. When that is elevated and sublime, approved of God and conscience, it will call forth the noblest energies and affections of the human soul; but when base and ignoble, it will not fail to corrupt and vilify the nature. Let such, then, as are engaged in the formation of the infant mind, remember, that where an inordinate desire for sensual and selfish gratification predominates in the heart, the grand object of ambition will be low and sordid, for it will centre in *self*. That "as the strength of the body lies chiefly in being able to endure hardships, so also does that of the mind. And that the great principle and foundation of all virtue is placed in this, that a man is able to deny

himself his own desires, cross his own inclinations, and purely follow what reason directs as best, though the appetite lean the other way."*

Let the fond parent examine the magnitude of the barrier she throws in the way of her child's ever attaining this necessary ascendancy over the selfish and dissocial passions, when she stimulates his desires by fond and pampering indulgence. Let her, therefore, learn to deny herself in this particular; and if she wishes to see her children really happy, let her make it her business to excite and cherish the benevolent and social affections in their little souls; for in the exercise of these, the true happiness of intellectual beings, through every stage of existence, will be found to consist.

All young creatures are naturally disposed to joy. It is the crossings of self-will that most frequently overcast "the sunshine of the breast." Where self-will is early subdued, which it may be by very early notions of obedience, and uniform simplicity in dress and diet, these crossings, which provoke and irritate the temper, will be unnecessary. The felicity will be uninterrupted. The buoyant spirits will have full play. Cheap and simple are the joys of Nature! Directed by her, the happiness of childhood is an easy purchase; for never did she intend that it should be paid for by the misery of the future life. Under her guidance, the pleasures and amusements of infancy may be made introductory to that wisdom, "whose paths are pleasantness, and whose end is peace!"

Adieu.

* Locke.

LETTER XI.

ASSOCIATIONS PRODUCTIVE OF VANITY.

Advantages resulting from directing the attention to an examination of the objects of sense.—Associations begetting preference for the splendid, and contempt for the useful.—Illustrations.

THE associations which beget esteem, or inspire predilection, for certain objects or qualities, naturally present themselves as the next subject of our consideration. On the formation of these depend the strength and virtue of the future character, which will be found to rise or fall, to become wise or foolish, virtuous or vicious, *in exact proportion as the objects of esteem are found worthy or unworthy of a rational and accountable being.*

I fear I may be thought to proceed upon a chimerical hypothesis, when I refer these important associations to the early age of which we are now treating; but let it be remembered, that we are still speaking of those associations which are rendered permanent, not so much by the strength of the impression, as by the frequency of repetition. Now it appears to me that those we wish to remain permanent cannot be too early impressed, or too frequently repeated; and that it is of the utmost consequence that we proceed in the education of the heart and mind in an uniform tenor, never counteracting ourselves, by teaching at one period of life what we wish untaught at another.

The pleasurable sensation produced in early infancy by gaudy colours, by light and sound, is intended,

by the wisdom and goodness of Providence, as a source of happiness and improvement. And here it is worthy of remark, that as each of the amiable passions of our nature—love, hope, gratitude, and joy—has a tendency to produce the benevolent affections; while hatred, fear, revenge, &c. have all a tendency to produce malevolence; a school of virtue is opened by Nature in the bosom of creation. For are not the first feelings of the mind those of pleasure? whilst the objects that inspire delight are liberally scattered on every side. The helplessness of infancy naturally inspires that compassionate tenderness, which, by its emphatic expressions, awakes the infant heart to sympathetic affection, while gratitude disposes it to joy. Thus love, joy, gratitude, complacency, all unite in opening the heart to the impressions of virtue.

This, it appears to me, is the view we ought to take of the intentions of Nature (or rather of Nature's God) in forming the infant mind susceptible of pleasure from the objects of sight and sound, before the mental faculties have begun to open. And to this we may add another and important end, it was the design of Nature by these means (and Nature is never superfluous in means) to accomplish: By this pleasing sensation the mind is called to an examination of sensible objects, and where unthinking folly does not counteract the wise design by its fond and foolish interference, the rudiments of knowledge and experience are thus acquired.

Miss Edgeworth's plan of an institution for having servants educated to the care of children, is certainly excellent; but would it not be an improvement upon it, if young ladies, who are all brought up in the expectation of being wives and mothers,

were to receive a few instructions concerning the nature of the duties they ought in these characters to fulfil? A few plain and rational notions concerning the proper management of children from the first stage of infancy would, in all probability, be little less useful than any of the accomplishments on which they are taught to pique themselves. Were young women of all ranks to be a little instructed in the nature of the human mind, and the developement of its faculties; were they to be informed of the great importance of observing the early tendencies of the disposition, and made sensible how much these early tendencies depended on the judicious or injudicious management of infancy, we should not behold young mothers treating their children as animated dolls, who were merely intended to gratify their vanity, and give variety to their amusements.

For want of this necessary instruction, the wish to please the tender babe is often productive of its misery. Observing its attention to sound, we incessantly stun it with noise in order to promote its happiness; and no sooner do we observe its eyes fixed upon an object, than we hurry it away to some other which is in our opinion more gay or beautiful. By the jingle of bells and a bit of coral, we expect at all times to be able to withdraw its observation from whatever objects have attracted its curiosity. Often, indeed, do we tantalize it by a sight of forbidden treasure, and tease it into fretfulness by presenting objects to its curiosity which it is not permitted to examine or investigate by the only means of examination and investigation in its power, feeling and taste. Who has not sympathized in the misery of the poor child placed on its

mother's lap after dinner, before a table covered with shining chrystal? In vain does it stretch out the little hand, and strain the eager eye, after the prohibited decanter. Even the less unwieldly drinking glass is forbidden to its touch; and while lavish streams of nonsense are poured on it from every side, the poor little creature, insensible to the foolish flattery, frets with mortification and disappointment.

Would it not be better to present such objects to the sight of infants as may with safety be subjected to their curiosity? Nor when that is engaged, should we suffer their attention to be perpetually interrupted by presenting new objects to their observation. I have seen a child of six months old, with whom this mode of treatment had been observed, amuse herself for half an hour, by noticing the flowers upon printed callico hangings, which by the gravity of her looks, she appeared to be comparing with the flowers of the field.

Children brought up in the country have, in every stage and period, a great advantage over those cooped up in towns; but in the earlier stages of existence, the children of the poor have even in the country a manifest advantage over those of the rich. It is they alone who are permitted to feel and to enjoy the rich provision made by nature for their instruction in its full extent. Accordingly, we shall find that the children of peasants of the lowest class, nay, even the children of gypsies, have, at three years of age, a greater stock of ideas, acquired from the examination of sensible objects, and are infinitely more capable of taking care of themselves, than children of the higher ranks at six.

On a woody and steep declivity of the Cotteswold hills, where they project into the vale of

Gloucester, stands a small cot inhabited by a poor widow, or rather a deserted wife, who was left with two infants, for whose provision she exerted herself in the labours of the field, and being a woman of remarkable strength and dexterity, she found constant employment with the neighbouring farmers. Soon as her youngest boy was weaned, she consigned him to the care of his brother, not yet three years of age. After having cut the brown bread which was to supply them with food for the day, and given necessary instructions to the elder boy, who was to act as cook, housekeeper, and nurse, she left them generally about five in the morning, and seldom returned till night. At the time I first saw this little pair (which I frequently did every day for weeks together, when on a visit to a family in the neighbourhood) the eldest was near five, and the youngest about two years of age. Each might have sat for the picture of an infant Hercules. By living almost constantly in the open air, they had acquired a degree of hardiness and vigour, seldom to be met with at that early age ; and by experience had become so well acquainted with the objects around them, and with the nature of every danger to which they were exposed, that though often on the edge of precipices which would make a fine lady shudder with horror, and where a fine little master would most probably have broken his neck, I never heard of their meeting with the smallest accident or disaster. When the hours of meal arrived, the elder, who never for a moment forsook his little charge, took him into the cot, and seating him in a corner, proceeded to make a fire of sticks, which he managed with great dexterity. The brown bread was then crumbled down, boiled with water, and sweetened with a very little very coarse sugar.

This plain, but from its effects evidently wholesome viand, he then placed on the floor, and sitting down betwixt it and his brother, gave him alternate spoonful with himself till all was finished.

"Take care, Dan," said a lady who once happened to step into the cottage at the beginning of this operation, "Take care, that you don't scald your brother's mouth."

'No fear o' that,' returned the boy, 'for Ise always takes un first to self.'

You will, perhaps, be at a loss to conjecture the meaning of this long digression. You must be assured I do not intend to insinuate that children ought to be thus left to the care of nature and chance; though from such instances as the above, I think it evident that our over-abundant solicitude is in some respects injurious to the infant mind. Nor is it the mind alone that suffers from our superabundant care: for by it we may assure ourselves that the person is frequently brought into danger. The child who is always watched, knows not how to make use of liberty, and runs the risk of his life every time he is left to his own discretion. It is the maid's business to preserve him from falling out of the window, or running into the fire, or the water; and the moment she remits her vigilance, he is lost.

Where people of fortune pique themselves upon helplessness and imbecility as a mark of distinction, it is very natural that they should wish their children to enjoy the same species of superiority; but surely minds of a higher rank ought to consider the real advantage of their children as a point of more importance than the gratification of an idle vanity. If they carefully attend to the wise designs of Nature, and observe her laws, they will

provide for their children that species of instruction which she has qualified them to receive. If it appear to have been the design of Nature, in attaching pleasurable sensations to light and colours, to attract the attention to the examination of sensible objects for the acquirement of experience ; why should we counteract her wise intention, by rendering that instinctive delight a mere instrument of vanity ? Instead of observing the moment when the beauty of an object has sufficiently excited the attention towards it, to proceed to the examination of its use and properties, we substitute beauty for utility, and make *pretty* the only criterion of worth. *Pretty*, in the language of the nursery, is the only epithet of admiration. The *useful* is there held in contempt ; and *good* only signifies what pleases the palate. Can we imagine that false associations may not thus be formed, which are never after to be eradicated ?

If we consider it of any consequence, that the feelings of esteem and complacency should be attached to real worth, we shall not think the false associations of the earliest infancy unworthy our attention. Much may be done in this way, while the mind is yet only capable of making observations on objects of sense.

Even the toys of childhood may be rendered instrumental either to the wisdom or the folly of the future character. When children have learned from frequent and constantly-reiterated impression to place an adventitious value upon trifles, is it to be supposed that their minds will be easily prepared for the investigation of truth ? But where, on the contrary, they have been from infancy accustomed only to such objects as had in them some degree of utility, and which they have learned to appre-

ciate according to the degree of utility they possessed ; the mind will not only have the advantage of being free from prejudice, but a direction will have been given to curiosity, which will be found of important consequence to the preceptor. As children advance in experience, and become capable of making some observations upon the tendency of actions in human conduct, it becomes more and more necessary to watch over their associations with regard to the point in question. Every thing then depends upon the conduct of those around them ; nor can we hope to teach them to appreciate that as estimable, which our conduct declares we do not ourselves esteem.

" We ought to love people who are good, and wise, and pious," said an old lady to her little grandson ; " for you know, my dear, that God loves them, and that they will go to heaven."

" And is Lady ****, and Lady ****, good, and wise, and pious, Grand-Mamma ? And does God love them, and will they go to heaven ?"

" I do not know about their goodness, my dear, but they are very genteel people, and keep the best company, and we need not trouble ourselves about their goodness."

" But I am sure Mrs. ****, is very good, and very wise, and very pious too, for I heard both Dr. **** and you say so t'other day ; but you never ask her to fine dinners, as you do Lady ****, and Lady **** ; though now I remember she was asked next day *to eat up the fragments*, as my aunt Julia said. And do you remember, Grand-Mamma, how vexed you and aunt Julia were, when Sir John **** was let into such company ? And aunt Julia, you know, went over beside Sir John and never took any notice of Mrs. **** after he came

in, nor spoke a word to her the whole evening, but seemed quite ashamed of her being there? Now if she had told Sir John that she was so wise and so good, and that God loved her, would he not have loved her too?"

"You know, my dear," returns the fond grandmother, "that Sir John is a man of fashion, and people of his rank expect to meet only with people of style, you know, like themselves. And Mrs. **** has no great fortune, and keeps no carriage, and does not dress fashionably, so that one does not like to introduce her into company. But be you good and wise, my dear, and every body will love *you*."

While respect and esteem for goodness, wisdom, and piety, are thus professed in *words*, but manifestly contradicted by the whole tenor of our actions, the impression that will ultimately prevail is obvious. The more we examine this point, the more reason shall we have to be convinced *that the education which is not conducted upon consistent principles, never can be productive of any good.* It is in vain that we labour to reconcile the worship of God and Mammon. If we teach the first by our lips, and the latter by our lives, we may assure ourselves that the latter only will be taught effectually. Had the Lady I have mentioned above studied consistency, her lesson to her grandson would have run as follows:

"You see, my dear boy, the advantages of riches, which procure people respect and esteem; therefore you must by all means strive to become rich. But riches alone are not sufficient, for very vulgar people may become rich; but you must likewise be fashionable, and keep fashionable company, and learn to like what fashionable people like,

and to do what fashionable people do ; and to hate every thing, and every person, that is vulgar and ungenteel. You must always keep it in remembrance, that if you are a man of fashion, you will gain admittance into *the best of company*, though you have no good quality to recommend you ; nay, though you are guilty of the most atrocious sins, provided they be the sins of a gentleman. For you see, my dear, how my Lord ***, and Mr. ***, and Sir ***, are sought after, and respected, and caressed, by people of fashion ; though we all know, that they have been guilty of murder, and adultery, and seduction ; that they are tyrannical in their dispositions, unjust in their dealings, and equally capricious and foolish in every part of their conduct. But still they are *men of fashion*, and on that account are received into the best of company. Make it, therefore, your endeavour, my dear, to be a man of fashion, and every body that is worth knowing will love you." Every word here said would have been so correspondent with the associations already formed, and perpetually reiterated, that the mind would not have been bewildered between two opposite principles of action. All would have been plain and consistent.

Is any fashionable mother shocked at the idea of repeating this lesson to her child *in words?* Let her reflect, whether she may not every day have repeated it far more forcibly by her conduct ; and let her remember, that those associations which lead to preference or contempt, are not the work of a few set lessons, but are formed by sympathy, imitation, and habit.

Believing in the truth of the observation with which I concluded the last sentence, I should here, were these Letters intended for your private peru-

sal, close the subject at once; but if they are given to the public, I am, alas! too sensible that they may be read by many mothers, whose families are conducted upon principles very different from those which regulate yours! From the earliest dawn of reason, the children of my friend must learn an esteem for virtue, and an aversion and contempt for vice, from the tenor of all that is presented to their observation. They uniformly behold respect and esteem attending on wisdom and worth. The respect of civility they indeed see given to rank, but they soon learn to distinguish it from that *respect of the heart* which they see reserved for superiority of worth. They are taught lessons of benevolence, not by words but by actions. The sympathies of their hearts are thus imperceptibly turned into the current of virtue; while religion appears not as a cold and contrary running stream into which they must occasionally dip, but as the sweet and delightful fountain of all that is good and amiable!

In what I have then yet to add, you, my friend, and those who are like you, will only find cause of self-congratulation. You will, perhaps, see reason to set a higher value upon the advantages enjoyed by your children than has before occurred to you; and while you reflect on these with the gratitude so natural to your heart, may it be the boon of the God of mercies to confirm and realize the delightful hopes that spring in your maternal bosom!

Adieu.

LETTER XII.

ASSOCIATIONS PRODUCTIVE OF SELFISHNESS AND PRIDE.

Love of Wealth: how inspired.—Effects of the love of wealth upon individuals and society.—Advantages of keeping this desire in subjection.—Observations.

It is observed by the judicious author of the Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, that of the various objects of our pursuit in life, hardly any one of them is appreciated by any two men in the same manner; and that frequently what one man considers as essential to his happiness, is regarded with indifference or dislike by another. "Of these differences of opinion," he continues, "much is, no doubt, to be ascribed to a diversity of constitution, which renders a particular employment of the intellectual or active powers agreeable to one man, which is not equally so to another. *But much is likewise to be ascribed to the effect of association; which prior to any experience of human life, connects pleasing ideas and pleasing feelings with different objects in the minds of different persons.* Again; That the casual associations which the mind forms in childhood, and in early youth, are frequently a source of inconvenience and of misconduct, is sufficiently obvious; but that this tendency in our nature increases, upon the whole, the sum of human enjoyment, appears to me to be indisputable; *and the instances in which it misleads us from our duty and our happiness, only prove to what import-*

ant ends it might be subservient, if it were kept under proper regulation."

In order to ascertain what the associations are which thus mislead us from our duty and our happiness, it will be necessary to examine, as well as we are able, into the nature of the common objects of pursuit; those objects which we most eagerly desire and most highly prize, and the enjoyment of which, consequently, excites the greatest degree of self-complacency.

The first that occur to our consideration, are wealth, power, and glory. Mr. Stewart says, "It is on account of the enjoyments which it enables us to purchase, that money is originally desired; and that *in process of time, by means of the agreeable impressions associated with it*, it comes to be desired for its own sake; and even continues to be an object of our pursuit, long after we have lost all relish for those enjoyments which it enables us to command." I pay due deference to such authority; but must confess, that it appears to me, that *by means of the agreeable impressions associated with it*, wealth becomes a desirable object to the mind, long before any distinct notions are formed of *the enjoyments which it enables us to purchase.*

Of the various objects with which children are surrounded, those would naturally appear the most valuable which were the most useful, or which contributed in the greatest degree to their amusement. Nor is it easy to make children who have been brought up with simplicity, comprehend why a thing of little or no use is to be valued on account of what it cost. This adventitious value is, however, learned by imitation. Children see such things esteemed by those around them, and learn to pique themselves upon the possession of that which they are

told is beyond the purchase of the vulgar; and thus, at a period of life when a field-flower or a mountain-daisy would appear more valuable than a diamond to unsophisticated nature, do they learn an undue estimation for whatever distinguishes that rank which they behold the universal object of deference and respect.

The pity they are taught to bestow upon the poor, seldom inspires children with benevolence; because they are forced by early association to contemn poverty, and to consider it as a mark of inferiority, a specific distinction, in considering which, all idea of a common nature is lost.

Thus are the ideas of poverty and meanness, of wealth and respectability, linked together from the cradle, and become inseparable. Where there is much cultivation of mind, the association will no doubt be in some degree counteracted; but even in cultivated minds we frequently find a value given to wealth, on account of the ideas of honour with which it is associated, infinitely superior to that which would have been produced, merely by considering it as a means of procuring certain gratifications.

These gratifications may be in themselves really despised, by many a mind which is yet destitute of sufficient strength to bear being thought incapable of procuring them. And here I can appeal to all England for the truth of what I have advanced, as every individual who has had the opportunity of observation, must willingly acknowledge, that the exposure of income by a late tax has been the occasion of infinitely more distress to the feelings than any pecuniary deprivation could have produced. Who can, without pity, behold the veil which pride had thrown over penury, thus rudely torn? To those

who have been accustomed to connect the ideas of poverty and disgrace, the injury is intolerable; while the self-complacency with which their former equals talk of their thousands upon record aggravates the wound! Alas, how many of my sister spinsters might have been saved the pang of anguish upon this occasion, had the ideas of *worth* and *wealth* been from infancy kept separate and unconnected in their minds!

The respect paid to riches has been a theme of complaint with moralists of all ages. Even in the days of Homer,

> "Want was the scorn of every wealthy fool,
> And wit in rags was turned to ridicule."*

The son of Sirach, who, like Homer, drew his observations upon human nature not from books but men, has made many apposite remarks upon the same subject.

"When a rich man falleth he hath many helpers; he speaketh things not to be spoken, *and yet men justify him:* the poor man slipt, and they rebuked him; he spake wisely, and could have no place. When a rich man speaketh, every man holdeth his tongue; and lo! what he saith they extol it to the clouds! But if the poor man speaks, they say, what fellow is this?" "Gold hath been the ruin of many; it is a stumbling-block to every one that sacrificeth unto it, and every fool shall be taken therewith. Blessed is the rich that is found without blemish, *and hath not gone after gold.*

* The effects of the association we deprecate, in producing overbearing insolence, accompanied by meanness and a deficiency in true spirit has never been more beautifully or more justly described, than in the characters of Penelope's suitors, as they are inimitably drawn by the immortal bard.—See Homer's Odyssey, p. 19.

"Who is he?" The wise man emphatically asks, "Who hath been tried thereby, and found perfect? then *let him glory.*"

It was doubtless in consequence of observing the evil tendency of this association, that the Spartan legislator banished wealth from the republic. So long as the *spirit of his laws* continued to operate, Lacedæmon flourished. No sooner did poverty cease to be respected, than she sunk into contempt. The virtue of Athens, nay even of Rome itself, will be found exactly proportionate to the degree in which this sentiment operated upon the minds of the people. No sooner did riches arrogate to itself that respect which belongs to superior and intrinsic merit only, than all the patriotic virtues languished, and high-souled excellence bade a long adieu to man.

If we examine the basis of the virtues of Greece and Rome, in those eras of their different republics most renowned for virtue, we shall find it dependent on sentiments which it was reserved for the Gospel dispensation to perfect, and place in a superior light. The contempt for riches taught by Lycurgus, did not tend to annihilate pride, or to check presumption, or to soften the heart towards the unfortunate; it only taught the passions to flow in another channel. The love of liberty, that ennobling energy of our nature, which, when under proper regulations, (regulations taught by Christianity) is allied to the best affections of the human heart, was with them the source of pride, hatred, and cruelty. By our superior Lawgiver we are taught an indifference to riches, in common with all adventitious distinctions that are unconnected with the virtues of the heart: and to place our affections upon those

distinctions alone, which are in their natures inalienable, unalterable, and imperishable!

If we are not called upon to *renounce* wealth, we are surely restrained in its pursuit: for are we not expressly told, that "they who *trust in riches*, shall by no means enter into the kingdom of heaven?" And yet were the inhabitant of another sphere to visit us, would he not imagine, that the Being we worship is God who takes delight in wealth, and that we have received from him an assurance that poverty alone renders us obvious to his displeasure?

To what source shall we trace the universal indifference to the Divine command? All the sensual enjoyments that wealth can purchase, are in their nature limited; but the love of wealth is without bounds. Were it not connected with the idea of *power*, its influence would easily be kept within the pale of reason. It is to the love of power, then, that the love of wealth owes much of its influence on the human heart.

The love of power is said to be a primary principle in our common nature; but does it not owe much of its influence upon our hearts to early association? The pain of obedience impresses with an early idea of the pleasure of command; it is, therefore, to an inordinate desire for the gratification of self-will, that the love of power must ultimately be resolved.

It cannot be too deeply impressed upon our minds, that all the passions inspired by the love of wealth and power are of the unamiable kind; and if there be any truth in the remark we have so often had occasion to make, that every passion, of whatever class, has a tendency to generate passions of the same class, we can be at no loss to determine

what effect the inordinate love of wealth and power must have upon the mind. Here, again, we shall have reason to admire the Divine philosophy of Him who taught that the love of wealth and power are thorns which choak the good seed of truth, and who pronounced the worship of God to be incompatible with the worship of Mammon.

In contemplating the opposite characteristics which have distinguished some great nations, in the different periods of their history, we must be struck with the operation of a general sentiment, which seems at certain eras to have pervaded the whole mass, tinging individual character with the colouring of the whole. At those eras when wealth and power were the exclusive objects of pursuit, we shall find that vice and prosperity have been synonymous. The individuals who obtained possession of the envied prize, have been celebrated for pride and arrogance; while the baser crowd, who hated their pride and contemned their insolence, have been converted by the same association into a race of servile tools and flatterers.

Gibbon has well contrasted the character of a state in this degenerate period, with that which it boasted before the introduction of luxury had rendered the love of wealth the ruling principle. "In the last moments of her decay," says the celebrated historian, "Constantinople was, doubtless, more opulent and populous than Athens at her most flourishing era, *when a scanty sum of six thousand talents, or twelve hundred thousand pounds sterling, was possessed by twenty-one thousand male citizens of an adult age.* But each of these citizens was a freeman, who dared to assert the liberty of his thoughts, words, and actions, whose person and property were

guarded by equal law, and who exercised his independent vote in the government of the republic. Their number seemed to be multiplied by the strong and various discriminations of character; but the subject of the Byzantine empire, who assume and dishonour the names both of Greeks and Romans, present a *dead uniformity of abject vices*, which are neither softened by the weakness of humanity, nor animated by the vigour of memorable crimes."

Into this "dead uniformity of abject vices" must every nation sink, where the love of wealth and power pervades the public mind, and becomes the general sentiment, the predominating principle. It is not the individuals alone who possess wealth and power, that are contaminated by the love of these envied distinctions. Wherever an undue esteem for them prevails, the false associations which must inevitably be produced, will tend to destroy all the distinctions of vice and virtue. When the merit or demerit of an action is judged of, not by its consequences in producing happiness or misery to society, but by the station and influence of the individual who performs it; when all the ideas of respect and esteem are intimately blended with ideas of rank and fortune, will not the feelings of the heart, and the reasonings of the understanding be equally perverted? The sufferings of poverty will be then contemned, or turned into subject of merriment and derision. The tear of sensibility will no longer flow at the real distresses of a fellow-creature, though haply it may still be shed at the elegant description of imaginary woes. The sweet tie of sympathy, which binds man to man, will then be lost, with every true and genuine feeling of benevolence.

Where shall we then seek for that noble inde-

pendence of mind, which rests on conscious integrity, and which is the father of all the patriotic and manly virtues? If in the generous breast of any individual it may still be found, its influence will have no effect, for it will cease to be respected.

Oh! that the generous spirit of Britons may be roused to avert this dire calamity, which in the soft lap of luxury is now approaching to destroy us! In no way can it be so effectually averted, as by embuing the minds of the rising generation with such a love of knowledge and of virtue, founded on the firm basis of religious principle, as may preserve them from forming false and erroneous ideas concerning the chief good. They will then give to all, what justice and good sense require; "tribute to whom tribute, honour to whom honour:" but their love and their hatred, the passions and affections of their souls, will be placed on proper and adequate objects. Their contempt and detestation will be reserved for vice and folly; their admiration and esteem, for pre-eminence in goodness, knowledge, and virtue.

It must be obvious to every observer, that the influence of power and wealth over the affections, is in many instances inimical to the happiness, as well as to the virtue of individuals. It is this prevailing sentiment which renders people, whom fortune has placed in the middling ranks of society, ashamed of their station; and this false shame prompts them to live in such a manner as may induce a belief of their opulence at the expense of their independence. What must be the consequence to their unfortunate children? Accustomed to consider honour and esteem attached to luxury, and to connect the ideas of penury with disgrace, how bitter must to

them be that poverty, in which, by the folly of their parents, they must be inevitably involved !*

Never was there a period when the circumstance I have above alluded to, called for more serious consideration than at the present moment. Never till now, since Britain first rose to distinction among nations, were the middling classes of her children held in contempt. But where is now that middling class, which used to be considered the glory and the strength of the empire ? Should one not imagine it to be extinct ; and that *genteel* and *ungenteel* formed the sole known distinctions in society ? Even those whose virtues would have done honour to the soil in which they sprang, have caught the contagion, and by considering *greatness* alone as worthy of regard and estimation, have aimed a parricidal blow at humble, virtuous mediocrity.

I am well aware of the obloquy to which I may expose myself, by standing forth the champion of that unfashionable virtue, which, by being connected with an independent spirit, has been brought into disgrace, as savouring of republicanism ; but while the test I have proposed is for me, it is of little consequence to me who shall be against me.

Of those crimes to which the pursuit of wealth and power so frequently leads, I forbear to speak ; they are so obvious and so well known, that every

* How many of the children of professional men in particular may, on the death of their parents, when they experience the sad reverse of fortune, exclaim with Jaffier—

> " There's not a wretch that lives on *common charity*,
> But 's happier than me. For I have known
> The luscious sweets of plenty ! Every night
> Have slept with soft content about my head,
> And never waked but to a joyful morning.
> Yet now must fall like a full ear of corn,
> *Whose blossom' scaped, yet's wither'd in the ripening.*"

parent who has the least degree of principle, will naturally endeavour to guard his child against them. But it may be questioned, whether these endeavours are always so directed as to ensure success. If children have been taught to associate every idea of felicity with grandeur, every idea of respect and admiration, with worldly honours and preferment, is it to be supposed, that by a few lessons on the danger of avarice and ambition, these associations will be counteracted? Constant witnesses of our solicitude to appear members of the world of fashion, of our incessant pains to make acquaintance with the rich and great, while we despise or neglect the *good;* can we imagine, that riches and grandeur will not become the predominant desire of their hearts? With this desire the principles of worldly honour may indeed be made to quadrate; but let us remember, that with it the principles of religion and of sound sterling virtue must be eternally at variance.

We are taught to look upon the present period as an awful and portentous crisis, big with alarm to the rising generation. In one respect it certainly is so. The increasing prevalence of luxury, with the universal decrease of the means of procuring it, in the middling classes, must inevitably expose the rising generation to all the evils resulting from luxurious habits and dependent fortunes. The unhappy consequences must be foreseen by every thinking mind, and deprecated by every generous soul, abhorrent at the ideas of vice and slavery.

Were children taught by the conduct of their parents, as well as by the lessons of their preceptors, to estimate the advantages of wealth and power at *their proper value;* were the virtues of frugality, temperance, and economy, once more recalled

from their long and hopeless banishment, to some degree of respect and estimation ; and were that approbation and esteem, which is now bestowed on greatness, once more to become the meed of merit ; have we not reason to expect, that this *portentous crisis* would terminate in national prosperity, built not on the quicksand of extended commerce and flourishing manufacture, not on the blood-stained treasures of the East or West, but on the solid rock of public and private virtue.

Let every mother who has a sufficient degree of patriotism, and of parental tenderness, to feel a glow of heart in the contemplation of such a picture, consider herself as an instrument in the hand of Providence to contribute to its realization. Let her reflect, how much the proper education of one single family may eventually contribute towards it ; and that while the fruits of her labours are a rich harvest of peace, happiness, and virtue, which may descend through generations yet unborn, she will herself enjoy a glorious and eternal reward.

It is because they are hopeless of being able to stem the torrent by individual exertion, that individuals permit themselves to be carried down by the stream : for I am persuaded, that were all the joys of ambition, luxury, and dissipation, to be pursued by those alone who find pleasure in them, the number of their votaries would soon be considerably diminished. We are far more solicitous to *appear* happy than to be really so ; and to this *appearance* of happiness the reality is often sacrificed. Health, peace, and competence, are essential to human felicity ; yet health, and peace, and competence, are despised as vulgar blessings, of which we make a willing offering at the shrine of fashion.

Even the pleasures of society—pleasures so congenial to the human heart—are now almost exploded. When the feast of hospitality is spread by friendship for the objects of esteem and affection, it never fails to produce satisfaction, complacency, and delight. By convivial cheerfulness the cares of life are suspended, while sympathy opens the heart to the impressions of benevolence. The powers of conversation are then called forth with peculiar advantage. Sentiments are developed, and obtain a value from their currency, which was unknown even to the utterer. This is society, and for what is it now exchanged? For parties, where pride and ostentation open their doors for the reception of the vain and idle; for well-dressed mobs, who meet to complain of crowd, and heat, and noise, or to wrangle at the card-table; or, as Miss Edgeworth expresses it, "*to show their fine clothes, to weary and hate each other.*" And this is called *happiness!* But let the heart be asked, whether it deserves the name! If, by false association, the mind had not been enslaved to the name of *fashion*, is it not probable that we should have continued to prefer the social and improving intercourse of friendship to the tiresome and disgusting insipidity of a stupid crowd?

"But it is only in such crowds that people in a certain sphere can hope to mix with those of a superior rank. But for this blessed contrivance, they might have been condemned for ever to associate with their equals."

Let people who argue in this way, reflect what they really gain by this sort of acquaintance with their superiors;—a knowledge of their persons, and the privilege of exchanging bows and courtseys. And is this a recompense for the sacrifice of

time and fortune, and the social intercourse of friendship, and all the joys (to say nothing of the duties) of domestic life? Surely it could never be so deemed, were it not for the abiding and powerful influence of early association, which has connected the idea of happiness with a certain style of life, that has been adopted by those who are in possession of that wealth and power to which we are taught to bow with the implicit reverence of devotion.

This unhappy association is, indeed, a flood-gate to a tide of evils so extensive, so beyond the power of calculation to enumerate, that all I can say upon the subject must be considered only as hints, intended to draw the attention towards it. Different as its operation is upon the sexes, we shall find it equally inimical to the happiness and virtue of both. From habit and situation, the love of wealth and power is in the female mind somewhat circumscribed in its effects; but the associations arising from it do not fail to influence the heart and the conduct as essentially, though in a different direction, in the female as in the male part of the species; the ambition of vanity being little less injurious in its consequences than the ambition of pride. The passion for distinction is, it is true, apparently gratified at an easier rate in the one sex than in the other. But when distinction is sought after through the medium of vanity and folly, frivolity and dissipation, what is the result? Let us look around, and we shall be at no loss for an answer, *a melancholy answer!*

When the mind attaches every idea of felicity to this species of distinction, is it to be wondered that, in order to attain it, no sacrifice is deemed too great, no price too enormous? By means of this associa-

tion, have the boundaries between vice and virtue been swept away. Depravity no longer shrinks abashed from the presence of uncontaminated purity; nor does virtue turn indignant from the approach of vice, provided she have the stamp of fashion on her forehead.

How often, from this pernicious association, does the juvenile candidate for distinction assume the appearance of a degree of depravity at which his heart revolts? How often is he prompted by fashion to the commission of sins, for which he cannot plead the call of appetite, or the urgency of temptation? How often is he led to mistake the spirit of selfishness for manly independence, to smother the best affections of his heart as symptoms of weakness, and to assert opinions which his understanding condemns, because they are the opinions of those whom his perverted judgment has been taught to admire and to imitate?

By means of this association it happens, that so many in either sex have no conception of happiness independent of external circumstances. "*They do not search for it in themselves, but in the eyes of the world.* All their enjoyments must be *violent*, *sensual*, or *ostentatious*. Admire them, talk of them, flatter them; let the diurnal papers exhibit their names in capitals, and fashion crowd their door; let their equipages be splendid, and their mansions magnificent; their egress and regress recorded in the daily histories; or they sicken in the midst of health, they pine in the midst of abundance. To be *celebrated* even for folly, even for vice, is to them an enviable notoriety: to be unnoticed in public circles, in the midst of every real blessing and solid comfort at home, infuses a bitter into all those sweets, which God in his bounty has lavished." Let us

pursue the consequences as pointed out by the same enlightened pen.

"It would not be right," says our author, "to describe things in a declamatory and rhetorical manner, so as to violate the truth of representation, for the sake of maintaining even the cause of *religion*. But experience will justify me in asserting, that the numerous tribes in the gay and elevated circles, who pursue happiness in dissipation only, *exhibit many signs of peculiar irritation and misery*. They appear to have no resources in their own bosom. They depend on precarious externals, on the will and co-operation of others, for all their pleasures. Change of place is their grand remedy for their uneasy sensations. Like a sick man who turns from side to side on his bed, in hope of that sleep which his fever denies, they fly to various places of public resort; in the midst of amusements unamused, in the midst of pleasure unpleased; and reluctantly return to their *home*, where God has given them a good inheritance. They have used, or rather abused, all their comforts. They are glutted with pleasure. Nothing has the grace of novelty to recommend it. Their appetite grown dull, this world affording no new joy, and the next never in their thoughts, *they are at first the slaves of folly, and at last the victim of despair*."*

And is this the object of a mother's ambition for the darling children of her bosom? Is it to this she would devote the offspring Heaven has entrusted to her care? Whatever she may assert to the contrary, let her reflect, that if, by the tenor of her conversation and conduct, she inspire a prefer-

* Knox's Christian Philosophy, vol. ii.

ence for the objects of a vain and puerile ambition, the association of ideas thus excited will inevitably lead to all the consequences above described. From the mediocrity of fortune, her children may indeed be saved from publicity of folly ; but the effect upon their virtue and their happiness will be exactly the same. Let her contrast the picture : let her behold her children, rich in intellectual and moral worth, their desires regulated by virtue, their passions under the control of reason, and their hearts in possession of " that peace which passeth understanding." Let her see them ennobled by that species of superiority which alone commands the reverence of the heart, and enjoying that true dignity which confers the only real distinction. Let her imagine such children bedewing her tomb with the tears of filial gratitude ; and even in the latest hour blessing her memory, as the cause of the happiness that had marked their path in life, and as the conductor to that hope which sweetens the hour of dissolution.

How poor, in comparison of this, is the paltry ambition that is gratified by the envy, or even the admiration, of a few trifling and silly individuals ! And yet for the purpose of exciting this envy, and of procuring this admiration, do people court the assistance of wealth and honour, and assiduously solicit acquaintance with those who are in the enjoyment of the perishable distinctions they bestow ; by this means teaching their children to consider this as the first, the *only* object worthy the pursuit of rational and immortal beings.

Effectually to regulate the love of wealth, power, and glory, so as that they may be made secondary, not primary objects of esteem, requires a minute and scrupulous attention to circumstances, which

though apparently trivial, may be productive of the most important consequences.

Simplicity in dress, simplicity in the furniture of their apartment, and simplicity in the toys which are intended for their amusement, I consider as essential. It is by means of the latter especially, that the seeds of pride, vanity, and ostentation, are commonly first sown in the infant mind. We observe that children admire what is gaudy, and by giving them fine toys we think to gratify this natural propensity. But would we extend our observation a little further, we should be convinced that children are rather *attracted* than *gratified* by the sight of gay and brilliant objects, which soon lose the power of pleasing, unless they lead to the gratification of curiosity. After this gratification the little heart incessantly pants. But, alas! fine toys are not intended for this purpose. It is very naughty to break them; and why? Because, forsooth, they have cost a deal of money at the toy-shop! I remember having been told when very young, that

> "The children of Holland found pleasure in making
> What the children of England found pleasure in breaking."

And that it then forcibly struck me, that I should have had more pleasure in making and painting the little coach which I had drawn to pieces in half an hour, than I had experienced in demolishing it.

Why not gratify this natural propensity, by giving children toys on which they may exercise their ingenuity?

Often have I amused myself with observing a little group employed in erecting the tiny frabric of turf or pebbles. With what activity do they collect the

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materials, while fancy and judgment are equally employed in the selection. Animation and intelligence play upon the countenance of the ingenious contrivers, while hope quickens exertion and novelty gives a zest to pleasure.

While the powers of the mind are thus called forth, how many new ideas may it not receive? By the assistance of a few well-timed observations from a judicious mother, the building of the rush-covered edifice may be the means of laying the foundation of a just and elegant taste.

Let us now turn to the toy-strewed nursery, and observe the neglected baby-house, whose store of Lilliputian furniture was the admiration of an hour; but which, having never produced an emotion but that of short-lived wonder, is soon viewed with indifference; nor is ever resorted to as an object of delight, except when infant vanity can be gratified by exhibiting it to a stranger. Then, indeed, when the everwelcome incense of flattery has been poured on the costly toy, it does not fail to rise in the estimation of the owner, till it produces all the pride of property: a species of pride which all detest in others, and which is the never-failing mark of a narrow and sordid mind; but which is yet carefully instilled into children by the thoughtless vanity of parents.

Where a number of young people are brought up together, a tenaciousness with regard to property is frequently inspired and encouraged, with a view of teaching children to be careful and prudent. Of such an early tenaciousness concerning property, selfishness and avarice is, however, a much more probable result. Instead of teaching children to defend the little articles of property they are taught to call their own, with all the selfish pertinency of

so many petty-fogging attornies, would it not be better to make them sensible, that all property is a species of trust; that the only happiness conferred by its possession, is by giving opportunities for the exercise of benevolence; and that extreme selfishness with regard to property, partakes of the nature of injustice? "You know, my dears," would a prudent mother say to her children, "that this house and all it contains is mine. I hire servants to take care of the furniture, and am at pains to instruct them in doing it properly; but you know it is not for myself that I take this care. I consider all that is mine as intrusted to me for your advantage. It is you who enjoy all the benefit. Whatever I give to any of you, I expect you to take care of in the same way for the good of the rest. When you say *my top*, and *my doll*, remember that the top and the doll are only entrusted to your care, that you may, by preserving them, have it in your power to contribute to the amusement of your brothers and sisters." In families thus instructed, there would be none of those hateful wranglings, by which the benevolence of the youthful mind is so often destroyed. Instead of the frequent recurrence of "that's *mine*, and you shan't touch it;" we should hear children saying to each other; "that is mine and therefore you are welcome to it." It is in this manner only that we can counteract the pernicious tendency of the unjust or ungenerous associations attached to mine and thine—"those cold words," as St. Chrysostom calls them, "which extinguish in our hearts the fire of charity, and light up that of covetousness."

LETTER XIII.

ASSOCIATIONS PRODUCTIVE OF SELFISHNESS AND AMBITION.

Objections answered.—Love of power.—Love of glory; of praise; of dress; and of admiration.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You are apprehensive, that if too much pains were taken to guard young minds against all prepossessions in favour of riches and honours, it would, by removing the grand stimulus to industry, produce effects injurious to individual exertion, and consequently detrimental to the interests of society; nor can you consider the love of power as a pernicious passion; since earnestly to desire the power of doing good must be admitted to be a laudable species of ambition.

In answer to the first of your objections, I shall only observe, that in the present state of society, there is very little reason to dread any evil consequences from our endeavours to preserve the heart untainted by the love of wealth and power. The value of all the comforts and elegancies of life is easily learned. It were folly to depreciate or despise them. Let them hold a proper place in our esteem, but let them not be considered as the *chief good*, by beings professing a regard to moral and religious principle. When your pupils are introduced into a world where luxury maintains an almost universal empire, where all that is seen, and all that is heard tend to attach ideas of felicity to grandeur and dis-

tinction, they will find in the universal sentiment a sufficient stimulus to that industry by which alone they can maintain their rank in society ; nor will it be any loss to them to be qualified impartially to appreciate the real value of the general objects of pursuit.

If, indeed, we have no other solicitude concerning our children than to see them rich ; if we consider *wealth* and *happiness* as synonymous, and think worldly honours the first and greatest species of distinction ; we cannot too early or too assiduously cultivate the love of riches in the infant mind. The dictates of integrity, the call of honour, and the voice of conscience, we ought, in this case, to teach them to despise ; for often will they be found troublesome and detrimental. The forms of religion, and a prejudice in favour of some peculiar dogmas, we may indeed retain ; but let us beware of inculcating the spirit of the Gospel, for that will inevitably rise up in judgment to condemn us !

You cannot, from any thing I have advanced, believe me friendly to that despicable and silly prejudice against the possessors of rank and fortune, which we have observed in some narrow and illiberal minds ; who, far removed from all intercourse with that rank they affected to despise, indulged their envy and malevolence by indiscriminate invective against all who moved in a higher sphere.

A very little pains will prevent the rise of this illiberal prejudice in the minds of children, who, as soon as they are able to form any judgments concerning character, ought to be made sensible, that those who under all the disadvantages peculiar to an elevated situation, preserve their title to a superior species of distinction, have claim to very

superior merit. Illustrious instances of this kind of superiority, even in the most exalted stations, are happily not rare among us; and ought to be adduced as proofs of the happy consequence of an early and steady preference for wisdom and virtue. Had such characters been taught to consider wealth and power as the *chief good*, they would have rested satisfied with the distinction conferred by rank and riches, nor aimed at meriting the approbation of God, and the esteem of their fellow-creatures.

The bad consequences attendant upon associating the idea of *supreme good* with *rank* or *riches* are confined to no station. By means of this pernicious association, the heart of the mechanic may be as much perverted as the heart of a prince. The only difference is, that the child who is born to affluence and grandeur, and taught to consider these as the most desireable of all distinctions, will endeavour to realize the ideas of happiness associated with them by pride and vain glory; and as the self-complacency that is generated by any thing but conscious merit, destroys the energies of virtue, it is not to be expected, that a being who is taught to value itself on adventitious circumstances, will ever be conspicuous for worth or wisdom. Elated by the early conceived ideas of his own importance, and more anxious to maintain the dignity of his *rank* than of his *nature*, his pride will not preserve him from becoming the slave of brutal appetite; nor will it save him from the meanness of deceit, or the turpitude of treachery and revenge. The vices generated by this association in the higher orders render it doubly pernicious to those of inferior rank, for reasons which I have already explained. I shall now go on to examine the force of your objection against preserving our pupils

from those associations which tend to cherish the love of power.

To desire power as the means of dispensing happiness, appears, as you say, to be a laudable species of ambition. But, alas! how often is this desire a mere cheat of the imagination! a flimsy veil to cover from ourselves the pride and vanity of our own hearts! Let us assure ourselves that it is always so, till we can affirm, that all the power of benefiting others with which God has entrusted us, has been exerted to the utmost. The favour of God is promised to the *humble in heart*, and true humility will teach us to employ our solicitude in improving the talent committed to our care, and not in vain wishes for talents which Divine wisdom has withheld.

The power of contributing to the happiness of others is, in a greater or less degree, given to all. Children ought to be made early sensible of this. They ought to be taught an habitual respect for the feelings of others, and made to consider themselves as humble instruments in the hands of Providence for promoting the felicity of all around them. Let the spirit of benevolence be thus inspired, and in due time it will bring forth all its precious fruits. The attention to the feelings of others which I would here recommend, is very different from that sentimental sensibility which is a fashionable substitute for true benevolence. The former is totally inconsistent with that vanity and selfishness on which the latter is often founded. The one is the mere shadow of virtue, the other is its substance.

Chidren can no farther enter into the feelings they have never experienced, than by accommodating the tone of their behaviour to the outward symp-

toms of these feelings, which they will be led to do by the sympathies of unsophisticated Nature. These sympathies ought to be attended to and encouraged, but the *appearance* of them ought never to be insisted on. Instead of teaching children that they ought to *appear* sorrowful when they behold any person in pain, they ought to learn alacrity in serving and relieving them. These attentions will awaken sympathy by awakening attention. When they see a person in grief, it may be proper to explain to them the impropriety of appearing gay and joyous before the person who is unhappy; though at the same time I would be very careful to watch over, and reprehend, any affectation of a sensibility that was foreign to the heart. In this species of affectation children are very apt to be encouraged by the ill-judging partiality of parents; which is ever willing to construe the expressions of sympathy into the reality. Often have I seen a child get credit for the whining tone in which it pronounced the words *very sorry;* words, to which the listless eye, and unaltered countenance gave the lie direct. To this counterfeit sensibility, I confess I would give no quarter.

The associations which produce the love of glory come next under our consideration. To what these associations tend, I shall beg leave to illustrate by a passage from the Spectator; in which the glory of Lewis the XIVth, and the means by which this passion was inculcated, are examined and explained in a satisfactory manner.

"Lewis," says the author of this essay, "had his infancy attended by crafty and worldly men, who made extent of territory the most glorious instance of power, and mistook the spreading of fame for the acquisition of honour. The young monarch's

heart was by such conversation easily deluded into a fondness for vain-glory; and upon these unjust principles to form or fall in with suitable projects of invasion, rapine, murder and all the guilt that attend war, when it is unjust. At the same time that this tyranny was laid, sciences and arts were encouraged in the most generous manner, as if men of higher faculties were to be bribed to permit the massacre of the rest of the world. Every superstructure which the Court of France built upon their first designs, which were in themselves vicious, was suitable to this false foundation. *The ostentation of riches, the vanity of equipage, shame of poverty, and ignorance of modesty, were the common arts of life;* the generous love of one woman was changed into gallantry for all the sex, and the friendships among men turned into commerce of interests or mere professions. *While these were the rules of life, perjuries in the prince, and a general corruption of manners in the subject, were the snares in which France entangled all her neighbours.* With such false colours have the eyes of Lewis been enchanted, from the debaucheries of his early youth, to the superstition of his present age. Hence it is that he has the patience to have statues erected to his prowess, his valour, his fortitude; and, in the softnesses and luxuries of a court, to be applauded for magnanimity and enterprize in his military achievements."

The lustre shed upon the reign of Lewis by those "men of higher faculties," whom pride and ambition led him to protect and cherish, seems to have raised an enthusiam with regard to glory in the minds of his countrymen, which may be traced not only in the actions of their warriors, but in the writings of their most grave and acute philosophers.

In their systems of education, how often do we find the love of glory a substitute for the love of truth? And what is glory? The applause and admiration of the world. Not the applause of approbation, but that species of applause which is produced by whatever dazzles the senses, and astonishes by effects beyond our expectation.

The love of glory gives birth, it is true, to many splendid, and, it may sometimes chance, to useful actions. But if it be not regulated by principle, if the praise of man be *all*, and the approbation of God and conscience nothing, may it not frequently impel to actions that are highly criminal? False ideas of glory have made heroes the scourges of the human race. Hearts which were formed for benevolence, have, by the love of glory, been hardened to the commission of deeds at which humanity revolts; murder and devastation have been made the insignia of honour; and the widow's and the orphan's tears have constituted the precious pearls that form the hero's wreath.

Happily for mankind the power of extensive mischief is confined to a few; but the love of glory is not the monopoly of heroes.

> ——————"Not Kings alone,
> Each villager has his ambition too.
> No sultan prouder than his fetter'd slave;
> Slaves build their little Babylons of straw,
> Echo the proud Assyrian in their hearts,
> And cry—behold the wonders of my might."*

To the direction which this passion receives from early association, may we trace many of those eccentricities in human conduct, for which at first view we are at a loss to account. The field of

* Young.

slaughter is not the only theatre on which the love of glory is displayed. On the turf, at the gaming-table, nay, even on the *highway*, it often flourishes.* It instigates to the seduction of innocence, and is frequently the chief incitement to adultery. It makes the coward brave the vengeance of the Almighty, and gives to infidelity more than half its votaries.

In the female character, the love of glory is commonly displayed in braving the censures of the world, or in the exhibition of new and striking absurdities; though it sometimes takes a bolder flight, and leads to a dereliction of every obvious duty; while it pursues fame in a devious and unbeaten path, which, alas! leads but to mortification, disappointment, and repentance!

"Ought, then, the love of praise, to be eradicated from the human heart?" No. But it ought there to be associated with what is in itself praise-worthy.

> "Not absolutely vain is *human* praise;
> When human is supported by *divine*—
> Praise is the salt that seasons *right* to man,
> And whets his appetite for *moral* good.
> Thirst of applause is virtue's *second* guard,

* The unhappy fate of Mr. B. which may still be in the recollection of many of my readers, affords an apposite illustration.

This young gentleman, possessed of an easy or rather affluent fortune, became the head of a gang of robbers, with whom it appears he had formed an early acquaintance at the cock-pit. Among them he sought for glory, and obtained it; being no less distinguished for boldness of enterprize, than for the wisdom and sagacity with which he planned their extensive schemes of depredation. Detection at length followed, and he suffered the final reward of his perverted ambition, by the hands of the executioner. While in confinement, and after sentence of death had been passed upon him, he acknowledged that the character of Captain Macheath had been the model on which he had formed himself; and that it was the admiration excited at an early period for this hero, which had kindled the love of glory in his heart.—See Brodie's Trial.

Reason her first ; but reason wants an aid,
Our private reason is a flatterer ;
Thirst of applause calls public judgment in,
To poise our own, to keep an even scale,
And give endanger'd virtue fairer play."

Instead of an indiscriminate love of praise, we ought carefully to inspire our pupils with an ardent desire for the esteem and approbation of the worthy and discerning. We ought to impress them by our conduct with a sense of the veneration we feel for virtue and virtuous characters. And as soon as the light of reason begins to dawn, we ought to make them sensible that the esteem of the wise is more estimable than the applause of the many. The *love of admiration* has, indeed, by some authors been represented as the sole actuating principle that ought to govern the female mind. It has been held forth, not only as the parent of every female grace, but as the proper basis of every female virtue. Upon this pernicious principle has the education of females been too frequently conducted ! and miserable have been the consequences which have ensued, and still ensue, from this grand source of female depravity and folly.

To admiration women are from infancy taught to attach ideas of glory ; but that species of admiration, for the sake of which the voluptuary would degrade them beneath the rank of rational beings, cannot be the lot of all. It can only be bestowed on beauty ; and never does beauty appear so truly fascinating, as when it seems unconscious of the claim. If your daughters abound in personal charms, they will be admired, though the love of admiration be not uppermost in their hearts ; if they are destitute of beauty, the love of admiration will lead to disappointment and dismay. "May they not be admired

for their accomplishments?" you will probably ask; "and will not the wish for this admiration operate as an incitement to the acquirement of the accomplishment for which they are taught to expect applause?" Instead of such excitation, I should consider it a wiser and a safer part to make them early sensible of the real value of that applause, which is much more frequently extorted than sincere. By every means in my power, I should endeavour to render the pleasure of pleasing those with whom they are connected by the ties of duty and affection, a powerful motive in their breasts. If this motive be sufficiently strong, it will have all the effect as a stimulus to exertion, that the love of praise could possibly produce, while it will possess the inestimable advantage of preserving the mind from the contamination of vanity.

So sedulously would I guard against the introduction of this baneful passion, that I would not hesitate to dismiss every infant toy which I thought could be the means of insinuating its poison. Did I think with Rousseau that dolls were the means of inspiring a love of dress (one of the chief instruments of vanity,) no doll should ever be permitted to enter my doors. But, in my opinion, it is the use that is made of them, that can alone render dolls pernicious. In inspiring the love of dress, they may act as auxiliaries, but can never be principals. Where the love of finery does not operate, dolls will soon be laid aside; and to prevent such an attachment to them as may be injurious, it is only necessary that they should be dressed with the same simplicity as children. All the arguments which are employed by Rousseau, and by Lord Kames, who borrows his opinions on female education from Rousseau, in favour of dolls, would

(did I agree with them) furnish me with the most incontestible proofs of their pernicious tendency.

"The different instincts of the two sexes," says Lord Kames, "appear very early. A boy is continually in action; he loves a drum, a top, to ride upon a stick. A girl, wishing to be agreeable, is fond of ornaments that please the eye. *She begins with a doll, which she dresses and undresses, to try what ornaments will suit best. In due time the doll is laid aside, and the young woman's own person becomes the object of her attention.*"

As to the specific difference betwixt the instincts of the two sexes, which his lordship and Rousseau take for granted, I confess I am somewhat sceptical. I believe any little girl in high health and good spirits would, if permitted to follow the bent of her own inclination, prefer beating the drum, or whipping the top with her brother, to dressing and undressing the finest doll in her possession. Here, as in many other instances, we find the inclinations which we have inspired by means of early association, ascribed to original instinct.

Let us now attend to the tendency of the association which he describes as a *cause*, though it is in reality a *consequence*, of this "*dressing* and undressing;" in order to try the effects of a variety of ornaments on the doll, it is becoming "*fond of ornaments that please the eye;*" or in other words, the love of finery.

The passion for dress may be excused, or rather indeed applauded, in a being whose highest aim is to please, whose greatest virtue consists in being agreeable. Such appears to have been the opinion of Lord Kames: "A man says what he knows, a woman what is agreeable." (Admirable morality!) Again; "A man's conduct depends mostly on the

approbation of his own conscience; that of a woman, greatly on the opinion of others. A man who does his duty, can brave censure: a woman's conduct ought to be exemplary, in order to be esteemed by all. In the education of females, accordingly, no motive has a greater influence than the thought of what people will say of them." Mark the inconsistency of what follows. "*Virtue* is essential to genuine love. To support that sweet passion in any refined degree, there must be mutual esteem, *which cannot subsist without virtue.*" And what, let me ask, can the virtue be, which is founded on no higher ground than the *thought of what people will say?*

Where the desire of being agreeable supersedes the desire of being worthy, the character may be pleasing, but can never be estimable. Is it surprising, that beings educated upon such principles should be made the easy prey of insidious flattery? Taught to approve themselves, neither by the laws of God nor conscience, but by the applause of a vain and foolish world, can we wonder that they should so often make a sacrifice of all that is honourable, and respectable, and estimable, in order to attract the admiration which is in their eyes the supreme good?

If we wish that the virtue of our daughters should be of a more sterling stamp, not forged in the mint of vanity, but issuing from principle, we shall be pursuaded of the necessity of guarding against those early associations by which the love of admiration is produced.

Many are the females who might have soared to exalted excellence, but for the influence of this destructive affection for finery; which where it has been early and deeply rooted in the heart, is very

seldom afterwards to be extirpated. Do we not see daily instances of women, who are by no means deficient in understanding, or destitute of principle, devoting that time, and that attention, to the decoration of their persons, which, under the direction of reason and piety, might be improved to the noblest purposes? Of what improvement is the mind susceptible, whose thoughts are incessantly occupied on a subject of such trifling import! In the midst of her most serious studies, a cap or a feather will break the chain of ideas and effectually destroy their arrangement; so that the mind must become incapable of reasoning, or of pursuing the reasonings of others.

In women of moderate fortune the importance attached to dress is particularly pernicious; as with them the love of variety cannot be gratified, but at such an expense of *time* and *thought*, as must frequently encroach upon every serious duty.

A taste for books is sometimes, by superficial observers, objected to in women, as interfering with the performance of their duties, social and domestic, but I believe that in this class of society there is more time and trouble bestowed in alterations and re-alterations, in needless makings and modellings, than the greatest lover of literature ever bestowed on the cultivation of her understanding. In minds thus occupied, it is in vain that we look for strength of judgment, or even for elegance of taste. True taste requires a knowledge of the principles of beauty, which must be the result of cultivation. A delicate sense of propriety, the soul of true taste, is not a necessary concomitant to the love of finery; for often do we see those whose whole souls are engrossed by the love of dress, exposing themselves to ridicule by the in-

congruity of those very ornaments on which they set the highest value.

The consequence of this inordinate passion for dress, is not less fatal to the heart than to the understanding; which will appear evident, when we consider, that wherever the object of affection is nearly related to self, the selfish and dissocial passions must inevitably be produced. The love of dress partakes, in this respect, with the nature of the selfish gratifications in general, which, as we have already seen, are all inimical to the benevolent affections; but it has a still greater tendency than any of the others to the production of envy. While the desire of esteem and approbation enhances the benevolent and social affections, and gives rise to that virtuous emulation which imparts energy and activity to the mind; the inordinate love of dress and admiration produces a jealous spirit of rivalry, which frequently leads to malevolence. Hence that love of detraction, which is, alas! so very prevalent as to be deemed an inherent and radical disease of our common nature; but which, wherever it prevails, may easily be traced to the pain of disappointed vanity, thirsting for applause, and turning its hatred against the objects which obstruct its gratification. Envy is ever the daughter of personal vanity and mean ambition; but she is the mother of hatred, malice, and malignity. Is it to be the prey of such passions, that we wish to inspire our daughters with an early love of dress?

A thirst for power and glory are the stimulants of man's ambition; but we take care, by means of early association, to render vanity the sole operating principle in the mind of woman. It is for the gratification of vanity alone, that a female, educated

on the principles of Rousseau and his followers, can desire riches or power; and the gratification of the same vanity must constitute her sole notions of glory. What conduct can we expect from such a being? When the tempest of passion assails, will the virtue that is founded on the quicksand of vanity, be able to resist its force? The woman whose highest aim is to be agreeable, and whose chief expectation of becoming so is fixed by early association on personal decoration, will naturally give a preference to the society of fops and coxcombs, as it is from them her taste in dress will be most likely to receive the flattering incense of applause. Eager to approve herself to men of this description, is it to be wondered at, that her opinions, her prejudices, should receive a tint from theirs? The fear of what the world will say, (her only principle,) will have little influence in deterring from crimes of which the world may never know. What is, then, to save her from the seducer, to whom she finds herself more agreeable than to her husband? Alas, nothing! Of the shocking multitudes that have in these days sunk to depravity, where one has been the victim of passion, hundreds have fallen a prey to the corrupt and vicious principles which renders the voice of flattery the arbiter of conscience, and substitutes the love of praise for the desire of esteem.

If such are the consequences of an undue love of admiration, the love of dress, which is generally its first instrument, ought surely to be introduced with caution; and if the gratification arising from contemplating the finery of a doll has any influence in producing this passion, it is in my opinion a sufficient proof that dolls are improper and pernicious. "But dolls," it is said, "inspire girls with a love

of neatness, and give them a notion of making up the articles of dress with taste and elegance." The love of neatness will naturally spring from the love of order and propriety, which ought, I acknowledge, to be early and assiduously cultivated in the female mind; but that it can be thus cultivated without the aid of dolls, is sufficiently evinced in the females of a respectable sect, remarkable for personal neatness as well as for propriety of conduct. And surely the inventive powers of imagination may in infancy be turned to better account than in making up a doll's cap.

Why should the imitative faculties be confined to the subject of dress, while surrounded with innumerable objects on which it may be exercised to more advantage?

A little girl, intent on imitating the leaves or flowers of a plant with her pencil or scissors, may from the habits of observation thus acquired, be laying the foundation of future taste and knowledge. The rudest imitation of the higher works of art may give some idea of design and of proportion, but the constant and habitual application of the mind to personal ornament, can introduce no ideas but those which are associated with vanity and selfishness.

Should this unfortunate association have already taken place, it is proper to inquire how it may most effectually be counteracted. Is it by formal declamations against the vanity of dress? By grave lessons? By serious arguments? No. These will be found feeble palliatives against an inveterate disease. One remedy, and one alone, remains. The mother who would have her child superior to vanity, *must be superior to it herself.* The girl who at-

tends her mother's toilet, and is a constant witness of her anxious solicitude concerning personal appearance, must learn to consider personal appearance as an object of the first importance; should she even be employed during the tedious and momentous operation, in reading the Bible to her mother, or in committing whole chapters of it to memory; little will such studies, undertaken at such a time, affect the previous association. If the mother should even have transferred the love of personal decoration from herself to her child; if no longer vain of her own dress, she should now be only solicitous for the elegant appearance of her daughter; if this solicitude be carried too far; if it be obviously greater than that which is shown for the improvement of the heart and understanding; she may be assured she is by these means, however unintentionally, laying a snare for her daughter's virtue.

Far be it from me to recommend an ascetic contempt for the common modes of society. So insidious and deceitful are the worst of human passions, that pride generally contrives to lurk under the appearance of singularity. The affectation of it is, at least, always suspicious. It is not, therefore, by renouncing the ornaments which custom has rendered proper to her rank and station; nor is it by an *affectation* of plainness, nor is it by vehement declamations against the sin of vanity, that a mother is to show herself superior to the love of finery: But it is by evincing, in the whole tenor of her conduct and conversation, that dress is never considered by her as one of the material concerns of life. To give due weight to her maternal admonitions on this head, she must make it clearly evident, that while her regard for personal appearance is

connected with her notions of propriety, personal decoration occupies *little* of her *time*, *less* of her thoughts, and *none* of her affections.

Farewell.

LETTER XIV.

ASSOCIATIONS PRODUCTIVE OF PRIDE.

Danger of inspiring false notions of superiority.—Pride of birth.—Pride of station.—Consciousness of importance.—Effects of some modern improvements for shortening the road to information.—Conclusion.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE danger of encouraging arrogant pretensions to superiority will, I make no doubt, be acknowledged by all. Let us, however, take care, that in reprobating it, we make no partial reservations in favour of that species of pride to which early association has inclined our hearts. The pride of Wealth appears hateful to those who boast more gentility than riches: while by the purse-proud son of fortune, the pride of family is considered ridiculous. The unlettered observe the pride of learning with disgust, while the pride of ignorance is by the scholar deemed unpardonable folly and presumption. The devotee who renounces the pomps and vanities of the world, inveighs with equal zeal against the pride of all ranks and descriptions of his fellow-mortals; but whether this evil may not be sometimes tinctured with the pride he deprecates, is a question which charity forbids us to discuss.

Fully aware of the difficulty of disengaging the heart from all objects of false preference, so as to leave the judgment quite unbiassed, I have, in considering the question before us, carefully avoided trusting to its decision. The guide I have followed has been the precepts of the Gospel; for in these I have found a compendium of all that the most enlightened philosophy ever advanced—of all that the soundest wisdom has inculcated! The precepts of the Gospel I often find at variance with the precepts, and still oftener with the practices, which prevail in polished society; but they are never at variance with themselves. They all manifestly tend to what I consider the perfection of the moral character—love towards God, and pure benevolence towards all our fellow-creatures. They teach that these ennobling affections of the human soul cannot subsist with the selfish and dissocial passions. *Pride*, as the most potent, as well as most insidious, of the selfish and dissocial passions, they therefore condemn in all its branches. Nor is it the moral character alone which gains by the subjugation of this powerful passion, since whatever tends to corrupt the heart has a fatal influence upon the judgment.

That every species of pride is really adverse to the cultivation, not only of the benevolent affections, but even of the mental faculties, observation will convince us. Family pride, which arises from associating an idea of inherent superiority, with the idea of the family from which we sprung, leads, it is by some asserted, to generosity of sentiment and dignity of conduct. But does experience confirm the truth of this assertion? As far as mine extends, I confess it goes to establish the contrary. Like every other false sentiment founded on the basis of

prejudice, it misleads the judgment and corrupts the heart. In proportion as the mind arrogates to itself a superiority on account of extrinsic circumstances, will it generally be found destitute of real merit. What a man chiefly prizes in himself he will chiefly esteem in others; and as illustrious descent is not always attended by illustrious virtue, the associations of esteem and preference may thus be connected with the extreme of vice and folly. Where family pride predominates, I have too often seen worth and wisdom treated with contempt; and characters decidedly eminent for talents and virtues forced to endure the proud contumely of ignorance and insignificance. In such instances, it is not outraging probability to suppose, that the *scorners* might have risen to a level with the *scorned*, but for that early-imbibed notion of their own superiority, on which they indolently rested their claim to respect, and which, therefore, prevented them from pursuing the higher path to esteem, trodden by those whom pride taught them to consider their inferiors. (K)

In countries where pride is more abundant than riches, the mental mischief that is done by this deep-rooted prejudice, is, perhaps, less fatal to the representatives of ancient families, than to the collateral branches. A liberal education, if it does not conquer the prejudice here spoken of, will, by presenting new associations, counteract its pernicious tendency; while an opportunity of enlarging the sphere of observation, by mixing with the inhabitants of other countries, must subdue its offensive arrogance. But to the poorer branches of great families no such sources of improvement are open. Self satisfied with the inherent superiority to which

they have been taught to imagine themselves born, they seek no other distinction; or if ambition add its stimulus, it is not the ambition of meriting esteem, but the ambition of wealth and glory. Where this species of pride has become a national sentiment, its operation is not confined to the few noble families who can trace their lineage to a remote period. We shall sometimes find people whose genealogical table contains not three generations, assuming as much pride and arrogance on account of their *family*, as if they had sprung from the Guelphs or Gibbelines. Women, as their education is more confined, and their society more contracted than men, may be observed to retain this sentiment in greater force. In what force it is sometimes by them retained, might afford matter of amusement to one inclined to laugh at human folly; but when we behold it palsying the hand of virtuous industry, and destroying those energies of the mind that lead to the acquirement of moral and intellectual accomplishments, while it fosters the meanness of envy, and the superciliousness of disdain, we must seriously deplore it as a prejudice detrimental to the happiness and improvement of society.

Beware, then, my friend, of permitting your children to assume to themselves any merit, on account of the antiquity of the family from which they have descended. The characters of such of their ancestors as have been distinguished by talents, wisdom, or virtue, may, indeed, be described to them with advantage; but they ought, at the same time, to be made sensible, that it depends upon their own conduct to render an alliance with such respectable characters an honour to themselves. Let it be their ambition to emulate their

virtues; but let them be taught that such virtues would have been equally estimable in the sons of a tradesman or mechanic; and that it is the mean ideas which a want of education inspires, that alone constitutes what is called the *vulgar*.

While we explain to our children the advantages of education, let us beware of engendering pride on account of these advantages. The pride of superior knowledge is seldom the companion of superior abilities. It is, indeed, altogether incompatible with that soundness of judgment which appreciates things according to their real value: and, in the judgment of a Christian, moral worth must, for obvious reasons, outweigh all other considerations. Every association, therefore, which tends to produce pride on account of any attainment in knowledge, ought to be vigilantly guarded against. But were this caution to be attended to, what would become of most of the modern systems of education? What would become of all those arts which have been invented to give children such a smattering of knowledge as may inflame their vanity, while the understanding is left in darkness? True humility, as well as true dignity of mind, is only to be found with the thoroughly enlightened; but pride and arrogance are the inseparable attendants on superficial acquirements. In our anxious solicitude to give our children the appearance of attainment in knowledge, at an age when nature intended that the foundation of knowledge should be deeply laid; we make them skim the surface of science, using vanity as a stimulant to the unnatural exertion. The pride we take in their *seeming* progress, is but too easily communicated to the infant mind. The pride thus acquired is aggravated by the ideas of self-importance, which a child, who

finds its little attainments objects of interest to a whole family, cannot fail to entertain. This self-conceit must be not a little increased by the methods employed to facilitate its initiation into the rudiments of learning, or rather to cheat it into a knowledge of *words* and *terms*. For this purpose it knows invention to be taxed, and sums to be lavished. With conscious pride it views the expensive apparatus which is to save it the trouble of industry and application, and naturally conceives that amusement and the gratification of vanity are the prime objects in the education of *a gentleman*. Books are now a medium of information only to the vulgar. For the fortunate children of fashion, more appropriate means of knowledge have been discovered. The walls of their apartments are covered with science; the very chairs and tables are converted into preceptors in every branch of literature; and if this rage for giving instruction *at a glance* continue, I make no doubt that some ingenious weaver of Kidderminster may contrive to teach the dead languages by means of classical carpets!

To examine the depth of the knowledge required by such means, belongs to the second part of this work. It is sufficient at present that I point out the bad consequences of a mode of education that necessarily engenders pride and vanity.

It has been lamented by some sensible writers upon education, that of the number of books professedly written for children, there should be so few which can be safely recommended to their perusal. The fear of perverting the judgment at that early period, by erroneous or incomprehensible statements of facts or circumstances, has, in my opinion, been somewhat overrated; but the dan-

ger of inflaming the imagination, and kindling the passions, by a detail of ficticious wonders, or false and strained representations of supposed events, is deserving of our serious attention. It is not the moral of the tale alone to which a discriminating mother will attend: she will carefully observe its tendency, well knowing that the tendency may be pernicious, even where the moral is unexceptionable. On the minds of children the moral makes but a slight impression; but by the passions which it excites, by the train of ideas it associates, may the tendency of every book be determined.

The agency of supernatural beings, such as Fairies and Genii, is not seriously believed in by the child who takes most delight in perusing the extravagant compositions in which these fanciful agents are introduced; but the impression left upon the mind may, nevertheless, be sufficiently powerful to expose it to the influence of superstition in after-life. An early taste for the wonderful naturally disposes the mind to credulity; and by credulity the taste for the wonderful is gratified at so cheap a rate, that the person who has cherished it, turns with disgust from the sound reasoning that would enforce conviction. How many of the epidemic follies which have at different periods appeared to infect the human race, might a philosophic observer trace to this prolific source!

If the stories of giants and enchanters, of Fairies and Genii, produce a tendency to superstition, by the powerful impression they leave upon the fancy, we ought to rejoice in their expulsion from the juvenile library; but let us examine what has there supplied their place. A swarm of Lilliputian novels, pretty stories of pretty masters and misses, who ride in pretty coaches, and are rewarded by

fine clothes, and charming sweetmeats, for their good behaviour: and what impression do we suppose these circumstances are calculated to make upon the infant mind? A vague idea of the happiness attendant upon riches and honours; a desire of distinction engendered by false notions of glory; and false expectations concerning the rewards of vice and virtue. Should the impression be too faint to give strength and permanence to the pernicious associations thus produced, there is still another bad consequence attendant upon these pretty fictions, that is worthy of our consideration. In proportion as they give an unnecessary stimulus to imagination, they retard the progress of the other faculties of the mind; and while they create an insatiable thirst for novelty, they produce a habit of *indolent reverie*, which destroys the active power, by preventing their exertion. I have known children of uncommonly dull capacities, and who seemed very deficient in imagination, who yet took great delight in these fictions, especially where the events were new and marvellous; but I never could observe that any of the faculties were in the least degree improved by their perusal; so far the reverse, that I have generally found the dislike to application increased, and the capability of attention destroyed, after a free indulgence in these visionary tales.

Where the passions of wonder, terror, and surprise, are frequently excited by descriptions of the marvellous, such a tendency to these passions may be generated as shall render the mind prone to superstition and credulity; and though the impression made by fictions less improbable and absurd may be more slight and transient, they may, nevertheless, by means of false associations, sow the seeds of pride, ambition, and vain glory, in the infant heart.

Rather, however, would I permit a child to peruse the most foolish story-book that ever the wildest fancy formed, and trust to my own endeavours for counteracting its tendency, either by reason or ridicule, than hazard the consequences of betraying my anxiety in such a manner as must inevitably excite curiosity and suspicion. I honour the principle from which this tender solicitude to guard every avenue to error certainly springs; but at the same time must freely confess my apprehension, that the evil consequences which may arise from leading a child to consider itself in the light of an extraordinary being, for whom the best books that ever were written for children, are not sufficiently wise or good, may be of a more serious nature than any of those against which they so sedulously guard.

"The moon shines at night, when the sun is gone to bed," is an expression in one of Mrs. Barbauld's excellent little books for children, and objected to by Miss Edgeworth on account of the erroneous opinion it conveys. With all due deference to an authority so respectable, I much question, whether the idea excited by the expression above quoted can make more than a momentary impression on the most juvenile pupil; while the false opinions that may be formed of the tutor's motive for obliterating the reprobated line, will probably give birth to pride and suspicion, passions that are neither transient nor innoxious. To preserve the tender mind from false and erroneous notions upon every subject, appears at first sight to be very desirable; but to do so effectually, we must shut up the organs of sense, for by the impressions made upon these, thousands of erroneous notions are every day received, at a period when the judgment is immatured by experi-

ence, and the mind incapable of reflection. But as these impressions are slight, the associations formed by their means are transient, and may therefore be easily changed.

We may obliterate lines, and cut out whole pages, of the books we put into our children's hands, in the manner recommended by Miss Edgeworth, and yet find it impossible to prevent the misconceptions of infant inexperience, for these will often attach false ideas to a word or sentence which appears to us clear and intelligible. Our pains, in this respect, may be therefore thrown away, while the bad consequences may operate upon the *mind* for ever.

Where whole pages of a book are improper for a child's perusal, the book ought to be entirely withheld; and where we observe words or sentences liable to misconstruction in a book we think otherwise unexceptionable, would it not be better to mark them with a pencil, so as afterwards to examine the child upon them, in order to correct any erroneous opinion they may have conveyed, than to leave him to fill the chasm by conjecture? By thus pointing out the errors into which his unassisted judgment is liable to fall, we shall promote that teachableness of disposition so essential to the success of the tutor, and repel that early vanity, which, however powerful a weapon it may be found in the hands of the teacher, we cannot but consider as injurious to the pupil's mind. The possibility of converting vanity into pride, cannot, upon our principles, be admitted as an apology for encouraging the former; since to the system of morals we have adopted as our guide, they are equally repugnant and equally offensive. By the love of power, which originates in pride, the happi-

ness and virtue of the world have been as often and as greatly injured, as by the love of false glory, which has its source in vanity. Nor have we any reason to apprehend, that by repressing these passions we shall in any measure destroy the vigour, or damp the energy of the mind; since it can be proved by many examples, that the desire of esteem is a no less powerful stimulus than the love of praise; and that the complacency which arises from conscious desert, is more gratifying to the heart than all the joys of pride or ambition. This complacency children ought early to learn how to value and to cherish. "High complacency," says an ingenious writer,* is the most grateful of all the affections. It possesses an elevation and a suavity peculiar to itself. It is permanent satisfaction, enjoying the full approbation of reason, and consequently it suffers no alloy from the struggle of contending passions or opposite desires. When it is inspired by our own conduct, it is accompanied by self-approbation or the testimony of an applauding conscience, enlivened, perhaps, by the voice of gratitude, and enriched by the esteem of the worthy. If it proceeds from the conduct of others, it augments the pleasures of affection, friendship, and gratitude."

This species of self-complacency our pupils ought early to learn how to distinguish from that pride which proceeds from an erroneous opinion of one's own merit. The one is frequently found in union with humility: the other is accompanied by arrogance. Complacency is produced by the approbation of esteem: vanity by the flattery of admira-

* Cogan on the Passions.

tion. The good behaviour of children ought, therefore, to be approved, but never too highly praised. The indications of approbation are, indeed, so easily understood, even at a very early age, that a prudent mother will find no occasion for a lavish use of the stimulus of praise. Should it even prove otherwise, of which I have little apprehensions, I should rather that my child was to continue dull, than to become vain glorious. If, laying aside our partiality, we permit ourselves to observe the natural dispositions of children with attention, we shall be convinced, that where the animal spirits have not been checked by injudicious restraint, or unnecessary severity, they will be sufficiently vivacious without the aid of vanity.

Thus, my dear Friend, have I endeavoured as far as my knowledge and capacity extended, to point out the method most likely to ensure success in the cultivation of the heart. In urging the necessity of paying a strict attention to the bias given to the main springs of human action, the desires and aversions of the soul, I think I am sanctioned by the wisdom and experience of mankind in every age and nation. But in examining the associations productive of love and hatred, I am aware that I have in some points been led to dissent from opinions generally received, and to object to practices generally adopted. I am, therefore, prepared to expect the opposition of prejudice, though I hope my motive will shelter me from censure.

Firmly persuaded that where, by injudicious zeal, the ideas of pain and misery have been early associated with the ideas of religion and virtue, religion and virtue will have little influence on the heart; I have ventured to point out what appears to me to be the means by which these unfortunate

associations are frequently produced ; and thoroughly convinced that false ideas of happiness, early and powerfully connected with objects in their natures vain and perishable, lead to misery and disappointment, I have earnestly enforced the necessity of attending to these associations, and of tracing them to their source.

The sentiments which I have proposed to your consideration, are the fruits of reflection, observation, and experience ; but far from wishing to impose my opinions upon you with the confidence of pretended infallibility ; I only wish you to examine them with attention, and to decide upon them, as your own candour and good sense shall determine.

ADDITIONAL

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS.

TO THE FIRST VOLUME.

(A) p. 33.

SINCE the publication of the First Edition, the following passage of Malebranche, has offered itself as a confirmation of the theory I have adopted :—

"Les Passions les plus injustes et les plus dangereuses sont toutes les especes d'aversion. La raison de cela est que les manse de cette vie touchent plus vivement l'ame que les biens. Le sentiment de douleur est plus vif que le sentiment de plaisir. Et si l'on trouve des gens indifferens aux plaisirs et aux honneurs, il est difficile d'en trouver qui souffrent la douleur et le mepris sans inquietude.

"Lorsque l'ignorance et la foiblesse accompagnent la naine et la crainte, il se prodict sans cesse des jugemens violens et injustes, et des phantomes horribles. Pour changer un esprit possede de ces passions, il faut un plus grand miracle, que celui qui convertit St. Paul."

(B) p. 51.

An incident that made a deep impression upon me in childhood, occurs to my recollection, as explanatory of what is here advanced. A favourite little horse on which I first learned to ride, had conceived such an antipathy to the sound of a drum, as to become quite unmanageable whenever he was within hearing of the hated noise. By the advice of a sensible visitor, this antipathy was entirely conquered in the course of a few days. The horse who, by his direction, had been kept for a considerable time without food, was brought out into the court, where a drum was beat in his ears. He startled and kicked as usual; but when some corn was put upon the drum, he by degrees began to eye it with less aversion, and at length ventured to taste the tempting grain. The grain was removed, and the drum again beat; he startled less than formerly, and by the time the experiment had been four or five times repeated, became not only reconciled to the sound, but evidently to relish it as the signal of enjoyment. What was this, but counteracting one powerful association by means of another still more powerful?

(c) p. 53.

When we take a cool survey of the disputes that have most violently agitated the passions of mankind, we are astonished at the apparent insignificance of the questions which have at certain times embroiled the human race; and do not fail to give ourselves credit for superior wisdom, as we think it utterly impossible that we should ever have been led to consider such trifles as matters of importance. People accustomed to reflection will, however, make different conclusions. Good or evil may, it is true, be no longer so strongly associated in our minds with the cut or colour of a sacerdotal garment, as to inflame the passions of love or hatred, in the same degree as we are told it did,

> "When civil dudgeon first grew high,
> And men fell out, they knew not why;
> When hard words, jealousies, and fears,
> Set folks together by the ears."

But are there no popular prejudices in the present day, which posterity may in their turn be inclined to pity or deride? Do we now never condemn opinions, but on a thorough investigation of their nature and tendency; and does opposition in sentiment never, in these enlightened times, produce animosity, rancour, and hatred? Alas! I fear, that if many, even of those who trust "that they too have the Spirit of God," were to be asked for a reason of the hope that is in them, they would adduce this very hatred against those who differ from them, as its surest proof.

The strength of these associations becomes more evident, when we observe their power in affecting the judgment, even in matters obvious to the examination of the senses. I have, in early life, known some good old Jacobites, who, after seeing all the females of the present reigning family, would have persisted in the belief, that all the House of Hanover were ugly and unamiable! And some of the old independent school, who, though fond of music, hated the sound of an organ, merely through the force of that association which had attached the idea of episcopal worship to the sound. We may smile at such silly prejudices: but what shall we say to those of a Johnson?

(d) p. 66.

May I in this place be permitted a remonstrance to the inhabitants of great towns, whose poor infants are doomed, for the sake of air and exercise, to be dragged through crowded streets; or even after they have acquired the use of their legs, to have their limbs fettered by the benumbing grasp of a wearied and reluctant servant, who heavily moves along, or relieves herself by sitting down to chat with some fellow-labourer, to the great edification of her infant charge, and the probable improvement of her own morals.

Are there, then, no places to be found, where children might be safely left to find amusement for themselves? The inhabitants of country towns could surely, at the expense of a very trifling subscription, procure sufficient play-ground for their children; and even in the metropolis, how could the inclosures that adorn the centre of every square, be so usefully employed, or so agreeably ornamented, as by being converted to

this purpose ? At times, indeed, you may, perhaps, see some of the privileged children of the square in this sacred spot ; but never do you see the poor little beings left to enjoy the liberty of nature. Even in this place of safety their steps must be watched by a train of attendants, or, perhaps, by their wearied arms, dragged in slow and solemn pace round and round the dull and joyless scene. Why torture them with attendants, where no attendance is necessary ? What harm could befall them, if left to themselves ? If no boys above a certain age were admitted, the younger children might amuse, but they could not injure each other. A fall upon the soft grass, did it even happen, would be infinitely less injurious to their tender limbs, than the rude pulls they frequently meet with. The expense of a gate-keeper would be a trifling matter among the opulent families of the neighbourhood. A ticket might be delivered to him from every servant, on which he should instantly mark the minute of admission, and repeat the same when the children were taken away, by which means the servants would not have it in their power to deceive. Let mothers who are apprehensive of the consequences of this promiscuous intercourse of children of different ages, take the trouble of going to the Foundling Hospital at the children's play-hours. It is a delightful sight to a philanthropic mind ; they will there behold the genuine effusions of nature. In the tender care the elder takes of the younger, they will see the unsophisticated benevolence of the youthful heart. I speak not this from conjecture but from observation. It was long my favourite walk. A residence in the neighbourhood gave me an opportunity of frequently indulging myself in the pleasure of contemplating this group of innocent and happy beings, enjoying themselves without fear or restraint ; and never did I see the fortunate objects of this admirably well-conducted charity thus employed, without making a comparison between them and the poor little languid joyless beings, who are doomed to the constant superintendance of a train of domestics.

(E) p. 70.

I am much delighted to find my own observations upon the subject confirmed by the opinion of a superior mind, and shall gladly avail myself of the opportunity of enforcing it upon your consideration by such superior eloquence.

" That implicit credulity is the mark of a feeble mind," says Stewart, " will not be disputed : But it may not, perhaps, be as generally acknowledged, that the same is the case with unlimited scepticism ; on the contrary, we are sometimes apt to ascribe this disposition to a more than ordinary vigour of intellect. Such a prejudice was by no means unnatural at that period, in the history of modern Europe, when reason first began to throw off the yoke of authority ; and when it unquestionably required a superiority of understanding, as well as of intrepidity, for an individual to resist the contagion of prevailing superstition. But in the present age, in which the tendency of fashionable opinions is directly opposite to those of the vulgar, the philosophical creed, or the philosophical scepticism, of by far the greater number of those who value themselves on their emancipation from popular errors, arises from the very same weakness with the credulity of the multitude ; nor is it going far to say with Rousseau, *that he who, in the end of the eighteenth century, has brought himself to abandon all his early principles without discrimination, would probably have been a bigot in the days of the League.* In the midst of these contrary impulses of fashionable and of vulgar prejudices,

he alone evinces the superiority and the strength of his mind, who is able to disentangle truth from error, and to oppose the clear conclusions of his own unbiassed faculties to the united clamours of superstition and of false philosophy. Such are the men whom nature marks out to be the lights of the world, to fix the wavering opinions of the multitude, and to impress their own characters on that of the age."

(F) p. 91.

On the subject of religious instruction, much eloquence has been employed by an admired writer, whose observations on the necessity of imbuing the mind with early principles are so judicious, and whose arguments are so impressive, that I can add nothing to their weight. But while I profess my esteem for the motives which influenced, and my admiration of the talents which executed, this valuable work; it would be inconsistent with my notions of sincerity, did I not avow my dissent to some of the inferences and opinions there stated. In the chapter which explains "the necessity and duty of early instruction by analogy with human learning," there is much that is excellent; but if I understand the scope of the arguments made use of in that and the following chapter, they are intended to enforce the necessity of initiating the young pupil into all those mysteries of our holy faith, which have so many ages exercised the wisdom, the learning, the ingenuity, and, would to God I could not add, the temper of schoolmen and divines. Without combating the propriety, I shall content myself with pointing out the impossibility of giving clear ideas upon abstruse subjects to children. In early life I was accustomed to behold the frequent trial of the experiment. I have known many children who, at eight or ten years of age, could repeat long commentaries on the *Confession of Faith*, explanations of explanations on the doctrines of adoption, justification, and original sin; but confess I never met with one whose mind seemed to be so far impressed, as to have any rational notion of the principles upon which these articles of faith were founded. They had, indeed, learned them, as Mrs. More directs, "*as names and things on which our salvation hangs*;" and on that account venerated them for a time as incomprehensible mysteries, associating the idea of wickedness and reprobation to all that did not repeat the same belief in the same words. But what were the consequences of this species of instruction? Some, by having all their notions of religion comprised in those *peculiar doctrines* which they were taught to consider as its fundamental principles, doctrines which they were forced to venerate before they could be made to comprehend, continued to substitute a blind adherence to their sect, and a pious hatred to every other description of Christians, for that religion which purifieth the heart, and teaches unbounded love to God and man! Others, on finding that some points which they had been taught to consider as essential, (and with which they had associated all their ideas of the truth of Christianity) were not perfectly tenable, made no scruple to relinquish the whole; and I may truly say, the most confirmed infidels I have ever known were of this description of persons. I perfectly agree with Mrs. More in the propriety of taking example of our Saviour for our model in the instruction of youth. Sincerely do I agree with her, in earnestly recommending it to my readers to "teach as their blessed Saviour taught, by interesting parables; which, while they corrected the heart, left some exercise for the ingenuity in the solution, and for the feelings in their application. To teach as He taught, by seizing on surrounding objects,

passing events, local circumstances, peculiar characters, apt allusions, just analogy, appropriate illustration." To teach as He taught (I should beg leave to add) not by loading the memory, and perplexing the mind with subjects beyond its comprehension, but by exciting in the soul the spirit of fervent piety to God and love to man; bringing into constant exercise the best affections of the heart—gratitude, hope, joy, and charity. Above all, to teach as He taught, by setting an example of the purest virtue.

(G) p 148.

The testimony of the African travellers, Ledyard and Park, may with propriety be adduced in support of what has been advanced. "I have always remarked," says Ledyard, (whose words are repeated by Mr. Park) "that women in all countries are civil and obliging, tender and humane; that they are ever inclined to be gay and cheerful, timorous and modest; and that they do not hesitate, like men, to perform a generous action. Not haughty, not arrogant, not supercilious; they are full of courtesy, and fond of society: more liable in general to err than man, but in general also more virtuous, and performing more good actions than he. To a woman, whether civilized or savage, I never addressed myself in the language of decency and friendship, without receiving a decent and friendly answer; with man it has often been otherwise. In wandering over the barren plains of inhospitable Denmark, through honest Sweden, and frozen Lapland, rude and churlish Finland, unprincipled Russia, and the wide-spread regions of the wandering Tartar; if hungry, dry, cold, wet, or sick, the women have ever been friendly to me, and uniformly so; and to add to this virtue (so worthy the appellation of benevolence,) these actions have been performed in so free and so kind a manner, that if I was dry, I drank the sweetest draught, and if hungry, I ate the coarse morsel with a double relish."

(H) p. 166.

On the subject of self-command, proceeding from the early practice of self-denial, I have just met with some admirable observations in an anonymous volume, evidently the production of an accomplished and reflecting mind. A short extract may not be unacceptable to the reader.

The Scottish schoolmaster having undertaken to prove the advantages of a classical education to men in every sphere of life, instances the success of his countrymen as a proof of his assertion. The inference is denied by his opponent, who will not allow that this success is owing to their knowledge of Latin.

"To what is it then owing?"

'To their superior temperance; superior patience under trying circumstances; superior fidelity to their truth; and unremitting *attention* to their duty.'

"And what can this possibly proceed from, (cries the schoolmaster, exulting) but from their acquaintance with those illustrious characters of antiquity, whose godlike sentiments and conduct furnish such noble examples for imitation? What can produce impressions of temperance, patience, and content, superior to a Cincinnatus? What convey to a youthful mind lessons of true fortitude, magnanimity, and inflexible fidel-

ity, more effectually than the uniform steadiness of those immortal men, who, in the very *acme* of danger, and amidst the overwhelming crash of ruin and calamity, persevered in their duty to their country, and so often by mere dint of intrepidity, saved the Republic, when tottering on the very verge of destruction? No wonder our countrymen make so respectable a figure, when such examples as the Greek and Roman histories furnish, are held up to them in their youth, implanted in their tender minds, and in a manner incorporated with their natures! Yes, depend upon it, sir, that the success of our countrymen is chiefly, if not wholly, owing to their early acquaintance with the Roman Classics."

'I am very sorry (returns his adversary) that I cannot pay the Romans so high a compliment. The success to which you allude, is certainly owing to a superior education, but not such as you recommend. It is the superior education of *early restraint* opposed to *early indulgence*; of *rigid economy* to *extravagance*; of habitual *temperance* to habitual *pleasure*; of examples of prudence and religion, to folly, dissoluteness, and vice. Early impressions have, indeed, a very powerful effect upon future conduct; habits long established have still a greater. It is, therefore, of infinite importance to future success, that our children be educated so as to enable them to encounter the inevitable vicissitudes of life with firmness and fortitude; and what is, perhaps, still more essential to human comfort, to *feel* the inconveniences annexed to an unfavourable change of situation as little as possible. He who wishes to leave his son an inheritance of felicity, ought studiously to lay up for him, as soon as he can, such a *stock of restraints and refusals*, as may, in due time, yield a seasonable and plenteous increase. Indulgence in the early part of life is the sure source of future necessities; and an habitual gratification of what are called *the good things of this world*, the heaviest and most grievous tax that can possibly be laid on future tranquillity."*

(K) p. 221.

It is by a familiar operation of the associating principle, that spirit of pride is at first produced. Where the idea of Divine favour and Divine approbation has been exclusively attached, not to the truly religious in an extensive and comprehensive sense, but to the believers in any peculiar dogma, the holders of any peculiar opinion, the self-complacency that will naturally arise from the consciousness of this contracted species of merit, must infallibly generate pride. All ideas of meritoriousness being attached to the few who embrace the same opinions, and ideas of demerit and reprobation attached to those who oppose them, the spirit of benevolence must be in a great measure destroyed. By the strength of these associations has the fire of persecution been kindled, and the pure and lambent flame of Christian charity extinguished.

* See Memoirs of Charles Macpherson, esq.; published at Edinburgh, 1800.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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